DEEP THINGS OF GOD.

OR

MILK AND STRONG MEAT.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A DEEP THINGS OF GOD;

OR,

MILK AND STRONG MEAT:

CONTAINING

SPIRITUAL AND EXPERIMENTAL

REMARKS AND MEDITATIONS,

SUITED

TO THE CASES OF BABES, YOUNG MEN, AND FATHERS IN CHRIST:

PARTICULARLY,

TO SUCH AS ARE UNDER TRIALS AND TEMPTATIONS, AND WHO FEEL THE PLAGUE OF THEIR OWN HEARTS.

By Sir Richd Hill

I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee. DEUT. xxxi. 6, 8. HEB. xiii. 5.

When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt; neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee.

ISA. xliii. 2.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

THE following remarks and meditations were moſt of them written down, when I felt the power and ſweetneſs of them upon my own ſoul.

As they were put to paper without order or connection, ſo neither elegance or connection muſt be expected in the reading of them.

I am ſenſible that they contain *ſtrong and ſavory meat*, and ſuch as many, who are as yet but babes in Chriſt, cannot digeſt; much leſs will they be reliſhed by

the children of this world; and leaſt of all will they go down with the modern Phariſee, the ſtrutting daw in Chriſtian plumes, who, *having the form of godlineſs, but denying the power*, can but ill brook any exhortations to heavenly-mindedneſs, or cloſe walking with God. He tells you "he "would have every body be good, and "mind their duty; and all pretenſions "beyond this, he is ſure, are the effect of "hypocriſy and preciſeneſs." Then, as to ſpiritual deſertions and conſolations, theſe things, he is certain, are the mere whims of melancholy and enthuſiaſm: with regard to regeneration, we were all born again in baptiſm; and, for his part, he has no notion of *inward feelings*. But worſt of all can he bear the ſound of Salvation by Grace. His very heart riſes at the declaration, when he hears, that the moſt profligate and abandoned

ſinners

ſinners of mankind have as free a welcome to all goſpel bleſſings, without waiting for any amendment, as the ſtricteſt moraliſt upon earth. "Let who will believe ſuch extravagant opinions, he makes "no doubt, but piety, virtue, and good "works (offered up through the merits "of Chriſt) will recommend us to the fa-"vor of the *Deity*; and he is perſuaded, "that every man of ſenſe, and who is poſ-"ſeſſed with goodneſs of heart and libera-"lity of ſentiment, muſt be of the ſame "mind with himſelf. Indeed he cannot "think otherwiſe, without profeſſing him-"ſelf an enemy to morality, and without "harboring the moſt injurious notions of "the *Supreme Being*." Thus he believes *ſomething*, he hardly knows what, *about* the ſcriptures; however he readily perſuades himſelf, that he is a Chriſtian, and in the way to heaven, till, in the ſolemn moment

of

of departure, he lifts up his eyes and cries, *behold it was a dream!*

But though all the ungodly upon earth ſhould ſcoff; though the multitude of Formaliſts ſhould rage and ſwell; yet I am perſuaded, that poor, convinced, humbled ſinners, and eſpecially tempted ſouls fighting with beſetting ſins, and groaning for deliverance, will feed on the honey which theſe obſervations will, I truſt, be found to contain, and will find them *precious to their taſte; a feaſt of fat things, of wine on the lees well refined.* My wiſh, however, is, that they may be taken all together, collectively, and that no judgment may be formed of any of them ſeparately. In this view, I doubt not, but every experienced believer will ſet his ſeal to the truth of every one of them.

That

That no poor ſoul, who has received the grace of God in truth, may be tempted to deſpair on account of the prevalence of corruption, great care is taken to point out the difference between the falls of a believer and an unbeliever, as well by deſcribing the actings of mind both of the one and of the other, under ſuch circumſtances, as the ſtate of their perſons Godward. The latter (the unbeliever) condemned by the holy law, and deſtitute of a principle of grace, ſinking by his falls, like *lead in the mighty waters*: The former, (the believer) ſcreened from the curſe of the law, by that divine righteouſneſs, which cannot be ſullied by ſin, and which is proof againſt all the attacks of Satan's malice, reſembling wood, which though repeatedly daſhed by violence into the ocean, and immerſed for a time under the waves, as often riſes up again by the pow-

er

er of its own proper ſpecific tendency to mount upwards.

Various as the trials and temptations of God's children are, according to their circumſtances, conſtitutions and ſituations in life, it is hoped that every one will find ſomething in the following pages ſuited to his own particular ſtate; for though the Lord in his wiſdom and love always fits each trial, however ſore and grievous, to each believer, and each believer to each trial which is allotted to him, yet there is but one way of deliverance under all, which is by *looking to Jeſus*, and acting faith on the word of promiſe.

I am aware, that the ſame ſentiments and ideas will be found in many of the Numbers, particularly in thoſe which treat of juſtification, faith, and repentance; but as they

they are repreſented in different points of view, and juſt as they occurred to my own mind, I hope that whatever there is of repetition, inſtead of being tireſome, will tend to the greater confirmation of truth, and the more firm eſtabliſhment of the believer's ſoul in ſolid peace, comfort and holineſs.

It is now more than thirty years that the Lord has been training me up in the ſchool of experience, and it is almoſt thoſe many years that ſeveral of the following obſervations were put down in different diaries, merely for my own uſe, without the leaſt deſign of making them public; though the various ſtates, temptations, and viciſſitudes I have gone through (Jehovah's love ſtill remaining unchangeable) has greatly ſwelled the volume. A few judicious Chriſtians, to whom I communicated a

part

part of the manuſcript, having expreſſed much ſatisfaction in the peruſal of it, I came to the reſolution of printing it, and made ſome conſiderable addition to it; with no other view and deſign that what proceeded from the hope, that the whole might be made profitable to that church, which God the Redeemer hath purchaſed with his own blood.

ERRATA.

Page 17, line 19, before *with* add *and*.
Page 17, line 26, for *acting* read *actings*.
Page 47, line 20, for *will ever* read *ſhall ever*.
Page 77, line 4, for *raiſes* read *riſes*.
Page 114, line 3, for SPIRITUAL read GRADUAL.
Page 117, line 12, for *become* read *became*.
Page 127, for *there whilſt* read *whilſt there*.

REMARKS,

Remarks, Meditations, &c.

No. I.

HOW long might one live with ſome perſons who are looked upon as very good Chriſtians, and not know whether they had any ſouls or not!

No. II.

THE enmity there is in the fallen heart of man to God, will ever ſhew itſelf againſt Chriſt's faithful people. Self-love and ſelf-deceit are the parents of this hatred which the world ſhews towards real Chriſtians.

No. III.

AS the praiſe of true religion is not of men but of God, ſo there certainly is *a thing* called Religion which will pleaſe the world, whoſe praiſe is not of God but of men: but the down-right libertine and the real Chriſtian will both be diſapproved of, though the latter more than the former.

No. IV.

IF a man ſhew not what is generally thought too great a conformity to the image of Chriſt, nor too little conformity to the ways of the world, that man will be idolized; but then it muſt be obſerved, that this love towards him does not ariſe from what the people of the world ſee in him agreeable to the tempers of Jeſus Chriſt, but from what they perceive in him correſpondent with their own ſentiments and conduct, whilſt the holy, wary walk of the true believer, is as a thorn in the ſide of every counterfeit profeſſor.

No. V.

THAT Religion (if ſo it muſt be called) which a man keeps to himſelf, or which is confined to acts of kindneſs towards the body, will never cauſe the leaſt offence; but in proportion as any perſon is active in furthering the ſalvation of others, he is ſure of making himſelf obnoxious to the eyes of the world.

No. VI.

THE image of God, ſtamped upon the new-born ſoul, is what the moſt double refined formaliſt cannot bear, for as much as a vital Chriſtian is a living reproof to all ſuch ſkeletons of piety. Hence it is that they frequently gainſay, and oppoſe what in their own hearts they dreadfully miſtruſt to be right: and though they hate the holineſs of God's children, yet have they a kind of deviliſh and malicious pleaſure whenever they can pick out any failings or infirmities to reproach them with.

No. VII.

IF you will be the world's favorite, you muſt neither be too like God, nor too like the devil.

No. VIII.

SOME people are mightily offended at the word *ſaint:* a ſad proof that they themſelves have no title to the character; but ſure it is, that every perſon living is either a ſinner or a ſaint. The former all men are by nature, the latter a choſen few are by grace; yet a believer is ſtill a ſinner, though not under condemnation for ſin.

The word ſaint, from *ſanctus*, means nothing but an holy perſon; and an holy perſon, in the ſcripture account, is a believer and no other. So that whoever diſclaims the denomination of a Saint, thereby acknowledges himſelf to be under the curſe of God, and to have no right or title to any of the goſpel bleſſings.

The word of God knows no ſuch diſtinctions as virtuous men and vicious men, moral and immoral, &c. &c. but ranks the whole world into two

two claſſes, viz. believers and unbelievers; children of light, and children of darkneſs; regenerate and carnal, ſinners and ſaints.

The one accepted in Chriſt Jeſus: the other having the wrath of God abiding on them.

No. IX.

HEART-ſearching preaching, where it does not convince, is ſure to offend. Nothing is ſo cutting to an unrenewed heart, eſpecially where there is a decent outſide, as to have it's rottenneſs expoſed, it's refuge of lies ſwept away, and the pillow of forms, whereon it was ſleeping, removed from under the head. Whoſoever attempts this muſt expect to ſee the old man riſe and fume, ſince to approve the real chriſtian, and the real truth, would cauſe the Phariſee to condemn himſelf.

No. X.

THE moſt dangerous infidels are not the moſt open infidels. There it a ſet of men, who perſuade themſelves that they believe chriſtianity, whilſt in truth they are reaſoning chriſtianity quite out of doors.

No. XI.

WHAT pains do ſome parents take to teach their children the catechiſm, to make them repeat prayers night and morning, and to bring them to church, perhaps to ſacrament, who yet would be very uneaſy and much diſpleaſed to ſee thoſe children become real children of God living by faith above the world.

No. XII.

THERE may be a great deal of morality where there is no true religion; but there can be no true religion where there is no morality.

No. XIII.

WHAT avails it to attend conſtantly upon church and ſacrament, to be liberal in our alms-deeds, and diligent in reading the ſcriptures, if we are not *created anew in Chriſt Jeſus?* St. Paul makes no difference between the vileſt profligate and

and the faireſt moraliſt, but ranks all without exception under the liſt of *reprobates* who have not *Jeſus Chriſt in them.* 2 Cor. xiii. 5. So alſo the ſame apoſtle aſſures us that *if any man* (be he ever ſo ſtrict, devout and decent) *have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none of his.* Rom. viii. 9. The word of God makes it abſolutely neceſſary that *Chriſt be formed in us.* Gal. iv. 9. and without this ſpiritual birth, eternal truth repeatedly aſſures us that *we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.* John iii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

No. XIV.

THERE is a great deal of difference between praying and ſaying of prayers. There are many who never omit falling on their knees night and morning, and repeating a certain number of words, who never prayed in all their lives. They often carry petitions to God that have no reference to their own caſe, and look upon their prayers rather as gifts that they bring to him, than as means in the uſe of which they expect to receive any thing from him.

The heart may pray where there are no audible words, as in the caſe of *Hannah.* 1 Sam. i. 13. and ſuch prayer ſhall find acceſs to the throne

throne of grace; and, *vice verſâ*, there may be many words without any thing of the ſpirit of prayer accompanying them.

XV.

WHEN a poor unawakened ſoul, who has long lingered under ſome bodily diſeaſe dies, it it is often ſaid "it is happy for ſuch a one that he is releaſed."

No. XVI.

AS ſome things become petrified by the frequent dropping of water upon them, ſo ſome perſons who have ſat long under the word faithfully preached, without being converted, become more and more hardened.

No. XVII.

NOMINAL, lukewarm chriſtians are perhaps worſe enemies to religion than profeſſed infidels, and are generally the moſt bitter perſecutors that the people of God meet with.

No. XVIII.

No. XVIII.

SOME people, eſpecially thoſe *who have a name to live, and are dead*, are ſo exceedingly averſe to be brought to the knowledge of themſelves, and to loſe the good opinion they have formed of their own excellencies, that they cannot bear to ſee the corruption and rottenneſs of their own hearts, and are highly offended at the faithfulneſs of any miniſter who would ſtrip off their varniſh, and ſhew them to themſelves in their true colors.

No. XIX.

SCARCELY two perſons run the ſame road to deſtruction; but there is but one way to happineſs—*I am the way*, ſaith Chriſt.

No. XX.

WHEN it is ſaid "ſuch or ſuch perſons have never ſeen any thing of the world," it generally means

means that they have never been led about to play-houſes, balls, routs, &c. and have no acquaintance with what is commonly called *the beſt company*, in other words (too often) the moſt worthleſs and the moſt profligate part of the creation.

No. XXI.

HOW many people are there whoſe hearts are as much glued to the world as poſſible, who nevertheleſs fancy that they are entirely diſentangled from it?

No. XXII.

IN moſt caſes, we ought to weigh our intentions, before we put them into execution, to ſee whether we run any riſk in offending God in what we are about to do; but where our fleſhly luſts are concerned, it is quite otherwiſe: the leſs we argue and deliberate, the better. Whilſt we are debating, our paſſions are kindling, ſo that reaſoning with ourſelves here, is like flinging oil upon fire in order to extinguiſh it.—But flight and prayer are ſpecial helps.

No. XXIII.

No. XXIII.

THERE are few ſinners but what hope to repent before they die, and nevertheleſs continue to ſwallow the damnable intoxicating draughts of ſin. The extravagant folly of ſuch perſons may be compared to that of a man who ſtabs himſelf in order to heal the wound again.

No. XXIV.

THERE are thoſe who plunge themſelves deeper and deeper into ſin, in order to ſtifle the thoughts of thoſe ſins which they have already committed: this is juſt as if a man ſhould drink one doſe of poiſon in order to expel another.

No. XXV.

THERE are perhaps more ſouls loſt through a falſe confidence of ſalvation, than by any other deceit the Devil makes uſe of: I mean not amongſt

amongſt notorious ſinners, but among the more decent formaliſts, who, becauſe they have never fallen into any foul, groſs ſins, or becauſe their lives are ſomewhat reformed, and they practiſe ſome outward duties, make no doubt of the ſafety of their ſtate: whereas they have no union with Chriſt by faith; the great renovating change has never been wrought in them; their natures are ſtill unrenewed, their hearts unſanctified; they never ſaw and bewailed their own vileneſs; they never felt their real need of a Saviour, in a way of renunciation of their own righteouſneſs; nor do they pant and labour after higher degrees of grace and holineſs, like a true child of God, who can never reſt contented with his preſent attainments; but they keep plodding on in the ſame beaten track, vainly thinking to divide their hearts between God and the world; and contenting themſelves with a formal, lifeleſs, luke-warm religion, which only tends to their greater deluſion; and thus they go on dreaming of heaven till they awake in hell.

XXVI.

BECAUSE our bleſſed Lord, his apoſtles and prophers have ſaid ſuch and ſuch things, many

many think they believe them, when in truth they do nothing leſs. The reaſon why they ſo deceive themſelves, is, that what they read in the ſcripture, they readily make bend to their own fancies; but were they to hear the very ſame words from any miniſter of the goſpel in a ſermon, or to read them in any evangelical author, they would immediately exclaim againſt them, as Methodiſm, Enthuſiaſm, Calviniſm, Antinomianiſm, and what not.

To make us believe God's word upon its own record, and upon its own authority, requires a power more than human.

No. XXVII.

EXHORTATIONS to forſake ſin, and to obey God, upon Arminian Principles, never can be attended with any good ſucceſs, ſeeing they neither ſhew man the depth of his diſeaſe, nor the freeneſs, fullneſs, and all-ſufficiency of the Goſpel ſalvation: ſo that he neither knows his own utter helpleſſneſs, nor where all his ſtrength lies.

No. XXVIII.

WHAT pains do many lukewarm profeſſors take to keep themſelves faſt aſleep in carnal ſecurity! If they ſee their wretched caſe laid open by any Chriſtian writer, or faithful Miniſter, either they are ready to carp or quarrel with ſuch, or to conclude, that they themſelves know better, that the man is miſtaken, and that there is no need of ſo much ſtrictneſs and preciſeneſs, nor of that wonderful change of heart which only a few enthuſiaſts here and there make ſo abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation; but on the contrary, when they hear any formal, daubing, unawakened miniſter preach, or read any dry lifeleſs (wrongly called *religious*) book, how eager are they to catch at whatever may ſooth them in their deluſion! and are as much pleaſed with thoſe who help to lull them in their fatal dream, as a child is pleaſed to be lulled aſleep by the fables and tales of its nurſe.

No. XXIX.

No. XXIX.

THOUGH the Lord will never remember the ſins of a believer, to his condemnation; yet the believer himſelf will always remember them to his humiliation.

No. XXX.

IT is not uncommon to hear Profeſſors ſay, that "they have done with looking to frames and feelings; and what they depend on is the unchangeable promiſe of God."

This *may* be the language of ſound tried faith in the furnace; but I believe it is oftener the language of a ſpiritual decline, or of a looſe, careleſs walk. Whoever wiſhes to live near to God, and to have communion and fellowſhip with him, will put the higheſt value upon the ſenſible comforts of his Spirit.

We may ſet up diſtinctions about walking by faith and walking by ſight, and there may be times and caſes in which this diſtinction is to be attended to: but I can ſee no reaſon why the man who is

ſtrong in faith, ſhould not alſo be *filled with joy and peace in believing.*

That is an unſcriptural notion which would ſeparate ſalvation from its effects and privileges. Do I undervalue the blood of Jeſus, by ſeeking to *abound in hope through the power of the holy Ghoſt?* Do I the leſs truſt in the Saviour's Righteouſneſs, becauſe *the Spirit itſelf beareth witneſs with my Spirit that I am a child of God, enabling me to cry abba Father?* Do I give the leſs credit to the written word, becauſe I ſeek *to rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of Glory?* To have *acceſs with boldneſs and confidence* is a fruit of divine faith. To be *ſealed with the holy ſpirit of promiſe* is alſo the conſequence of believing. And if *the love of God is ſhed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghoſt* it is becauſe I am *juſtified by faith*, and *have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

I ſay therefore that there is much miſchief done by telling God's people that they are to ſit down contented without aſſurance and without comfort. Theſe are the bleſſings which accompany Salvation, though not Salvation itſelf. Theſe are the privileges of all true believers, though not the lot of all, eſpecially at all ſeaſons. Comfort and aſſurance muſt be ſought in the uſe of the appointed means; they are incompatible with a careleſs, prayerleſs walk, or with the indulgence of

of any one known ſin, however ſmall it may be thought. Whoſoever would enjoy the conſolations of the Spirit, muſt be afraid to grieve that bleſſed gueſt, or to quench his holy motions. The Chriſtian, who moſt rejoiceth in the Lord, will be he who walks moſt humbly and moſt cloſely with his God.

Whoever would examine his comforts, to ſee from what ſource they are derived, would do well to pay attention to the following method of trial; for though hypocrites ſeldom ſuſpect their comforts, yet the ſincere ſoul will often be queſtioning the truth of them, and will be anxious to know from what fountain they flow.

Firſt. If comforts proceed from Satan transformed into an Angel of light, they lead to ſin and preſumption; if from the Lord, they are always accompanied with a hatred of ſin, (eſpecially the ſin which does moſt eaſily beſet the ſoul) with a longing deſire to obtain victory over it.

Secondly. The comforts which proceed from God are always accompanied with a ſpirit of prayer and of praiſe. A praying, thankful frame of mind is the very temper which a ſoul enjoying the ſenſible preſence of its Saviour *naturally* (for the new nature has its acting as well as the old) falls into.—Whereas falſe comfort begets negligence in drawing near to God.

Thirdly. Where comforts really proceed from the holy Ghoſt, they make Chriſt more and more precious in all his offices; and cauſe ſelf to be abaſed, and to ſink into nothing.—Whereas falſe comfort always puffeth up, and makes the ſoul think itſelf ſomething when it is nothing.

No. XXXI.

IT may happen, that when a believer has been flattering himſelf that he has maſtered all his corruptions, the old ſore may break out again, and maſter him worſe than ever, to his own grief and ſhame, and (if his falls be known) to the triumph of the Devil's children.

No. XXXII.

FAITH and Converſion are the manifeſtative evidences of that love which God had to his people from everlaſting, and when they were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. *Faith* is that meſſenger which brings to the ſoul the knowledge of its reconciliation with God, and union with Chriſt, and *Converſion* proves the truth of faith; *a great number*

number believed and turned unto the Lord. Acts xi. 21. No one grace can exiſt before Faith.—*Faith purifies the heart. Faith worketh by love. Faith overcometh the world.*

No. XXXIII.

THERE is a text in St. Paul's Epiſtle to the Epheſians, which loſes much of its marrow and fatneſs as it is commonly taken and read. The words are theſe, Chap. ii. 4, 5. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in ſins."

Thus the paſſage ought to be read; and here the ſtop ought to be put, and not where it uſually is put, viz: after the words "hath quickened us together with Chriſt," which is a ſort of tautology, and only ſhews an act of power, but by no means ſets forth that act of free love to man as a ſinner, yea in his ſins, which the right ſenſe of this ſcripture elucidates.

No. XXXIV.

THERE never was nor ever will be any variance between God and man but on account of ſin.

ſin. But ſin is taken away by Chriſt, therefore thoſe who truly believe in him have no ſin at all to anſwer for. The Law will often be charging ſin on their conſciences, but Chriſt hath redeemed them from all its curſes. When they commit ſin, they are apt to think, O now this ſin is laid to my charge! God will impute it unto me, forgetting the Apoſtles challenge, *who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect?* and that *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſſpaſſes unto them.* David does not ſay, *bleſſed is the man who has no ſin*, he knew well that no ſuch man could have been found, but he ſays, *bleſſed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute ſin.*

No. XXXV.

TO a carnal man it muſt appear to be a very ſtrange diſſuaſive from ſin, that though a believer commit ſin, that ſin which he commits ſhall not bring him under any condemnation, but that God the Father will be propitious and favourable to him on account of the advocacy of Chriſt: yet this is the very argument which the beloved diſciple makes uſe of, and every real chriſtian feels its force, to reſtrain from ſin; for ſays he, *I write unto*

unto you that you ſin not, and if any man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our ſins.

No. XXXVI.

There is not a moment in which every believer does not appear before God as pure and ſpotleſs as the blood of Chriſt can make him, yea as pure as the immaculate Lamb himſelf; nor is there a moment in which the holy law can find the ſmalleſt fault with him; ſeeing that the righteouſneſs in which he ſtands, was as much wrought out by him in Chriſt, his ſecond and ſpiritual head and repreſentative, as the commandment was broken by him in Adam, his firſt and natural head and repreſentative. The righteouſneſs of Chriſt therefore is as much his, as the ſin of Adam was his, and this righteouſneſs always remains the ſame under all the various caſes, ſtates, and circumſtances a believer can be in.

No. XXXVII.

THERE is not one goſpel truth which nature doth not kick at with all her might. Even awakened

awakened ſouls cannot receive them but as the Lord is pleaſed to teach them little by little in a way of Experience; and whoever gets them in any other manner had better be without them.—Nature knows nothing of any Religion but that of works —Even after the ſoul is married to Chriſt, ſhe is hankering after her firſt huſband the Law, and notwithſtanding an Apoſtle tells her he is dead, ſhe can hardly give full credit to him, though at the riſk of being thought an Adultereſs. Rom. vii. 2, 3, 4. Nay, there are ſome truths which nature kicks at with both legs, and ſhe kicks contrary ways, till ſhe even kicks herſelf in the face.

For Inſtance: when ſhe hears of Salvation by faith only, the haughty dame kicks this away as licentious doctrine; but when ſhe hears of vital holineſs, and cloſe walking with God, Oh! this ſhe kicks at as unneceſſary preciſeneſs, and being *righteous overmuch*.

No. XXXVIII.

THERE are ſome miniſters, who, if they have given their hearers a ſip of pure goſpel wine, and brought their ſouls into a glowing ardor, immediately

mediately throw a gallon of cold water upon them whereby all the flame is quenched, or to vary the metaphor (ſince the ſcripture makes uſe of both) (Iſa. lv. 1.) if they have given them a taſte of goſpel milk, they cannot be ſatisfied till they have curdled it with a pailful of legal vinegar. Such miniſters may mean well, but it wont do, the heart gets hard, guilt cankers the conſcience, and the obedience which is produced, (if there be any at all) is at beſt ſlaviſh, never filial; they would guard againſt antinomianiſm, whilſt in truth they produce it, by drawing the flaming ſword of the Law, and thereby *guarding* the poor guilty ſinners free approach to Chriſt the tree of life, from whom alone fruit unto holineſs is to be found.

No. XXXIX.

DOES an Apoſtle ſay, "Pray without ceaſing?" Then what a condition muſt thoſe ſouls be in who never pray at all?—But what is meant by the exhortation? certainly it does not ſuppoſe that we ſhould be always on our knees, yet it undoubtedly ſuppoſes that whatever be the poſture of the body, the heart be conſtantly kept in a praying frame; and that *in every thing* we be ready to *give thanks*, or ſupplicate as circumſtances

ſtances may require. I would boldly pronounce that man to be a ſtranger to the ſpirit of prayer, who confines it *merely* to times and places; for ſure I am, that whoſoever is made ſenſible of his own weakneſs, and of Chriſt's all-ſufficiency, as well as of the continual bleſſings which he has received, is receiving, and hopes to receive from above, can never be long without a ſilent mental ejaculation at leaſt, and ſuch will find its way to the throne of grace, be the poſture of the body what it may.

Every real chriſtian knows well what it is to lift up his heart to God whilſt he is walking, travelling, working, lying on his bed, and even when he is in company; and often is he holding an intercourſe with Heaven, whilſt thoſe about him are buſied only with the world.

Every believer's prayer muſt be anſwered, not always agreeably to his own wiſhes, but always in the way which ſhall be beſt for him.—When Paul had *the thorn in his fleſh, the meſſenger of Satan ſent to buffet him*, he prayed the Lord *thrice* that it might depart from him. But the Lord's anſwer was, "my Grace is ſufficient for thee."

But a poor ſoul may ſay, Oh! prayer to me is all lip labour. I am only a ſpeaking carcaſs before the Lord; I am wholly dead; I have no ſpirit of prayer; no acceſs with boldneſs and confidence

to

to-the majeſty on high. Theſe very complaints are proofs, that thou knoweſt what no one but a believer can know, viz: the difference of addreſſing God from behind the cloud, and when he unveils his face, and ſhines with full luſtre upon the ſoul. Preſs on then, though it be in the dark. Soon ſhall the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe with healing under his wings.

XL.

SAINT PAUL ſays, *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf*, yea *that he hath reconciled us unto himſelf by Jeſus Chriſt*. After which he adds: *we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead be ye reconciled to God*, 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20. But if reconciliation took place, when the God-head was in the manhood of Chriſt crucified, if the Church of Corinth was already pardoned and juſtified, why does he now beſeech any, much leſs why does he intreat *believers* to be reconciled to God? Can they at the ſame time be reconciled and unreconciled? Is not this a contradiction.

There is no contradiction, but much beauty and more comfort in the paſſage. Although reconciliation, pardon and juſtification be one and only one compleat act, yet in ſcripture it bears a

kind of threefold aſpect. *Firſt*, from all Eternity, as the elect were choſen in Chriſt from before the foundation of the world. *Secondly*, when Chriſt hung upon the croſs, and cried *it is finiſhed*. *Thirdly*, when the pardon and reconciliation which Chriſt hath obtained, are applied to the believing ſinner's heart and conſcience by the Holy Ghoſt.—It is in this latter ſenſe that thoſe who already have reconciliation are prayed to be reconciled. And in the ſame ſenſe it is that our Lord teaches thoſe to whom he has forgiven all treſpaſſes, to pray "forgive us our treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us:" ſo that a believer is always reconciled, yea always perfectly reconciled, and not leſs ſo at one time than another, as he may be apt to ſuppoſe, when his corruptions ſhew their ugly gigantic heads: yet he ſtands in continual need of freſh applications of the blood of ſprinkling to comfort his conſcience, and to draw out his heart in a way of love and holy obedience.

XLI.

SANCTIFICATION is more to be judged of by inward workings of oppoſition to ſin, and longings after grace, than by any external acts either

either good or bad. This is meant of a man's own judgment of himſelf; for as others cannot ſee the heart, they can judge only by outward actions.

No. XLII.

WHAT is the cauſe that the ſoul, which has been long converted, ſometimes falls by the very ſin which it ſeemed to have gotten a complete victory over? The plain ſimple reaſon is, that the ſoul is off its guard. Even the wiſe virgins, though they had oil in their lamps, all ſlumbered and ſlept.

The young convert in his battles againſt ſin, is like a man fighting with a ſerpent, which he levels to the ground upon it's firſt attack, and ſo every time the venemous animal raiſes itſelf up againſt him, till the man leaves it, in his opinion, breathleſs upon the earth. But it ſoon appears, that the creature was only ſtunned, not killed; for recovering its force, it ſeizes the man unawares, and perhaps bites him worſe than ever. Ariſe, my ſoul, and trim thy lamp, leſt not ſin only, but death ſurpriſe thee in a ſtate of ſlumber.

No. XLIII.

THE moſt pure in heart, are uſually thoſe who moſt lament their heart impurity. It is by the light of grace only that the filthineſs of nature is diſcovered.

No. XLIV.

THOUGH a child of God glories in this, that *where ſin hath abounded, grace doth much more abound*; yet no child of God can ſin that grace may abound.

No. XLV.

WHENEVER Luther was aſked, what made the beſt Divine, he anſwered, *temptation*; and what makes the beſt Divine makes the beſt Chriſtian.

No. XLVI.

No. XLVI.

EVERY Child of God knows it to be ſound doctrine, that we are juſtified by faith only; and that true faith neceſſarily begets holineſs and good works. Yet in the knowledge of this truth, many a gracious ſoul goes to work quite at the wrong end, and thereby loſes both the privilege and comfort of looking directly at Chriſt as a ſinner: by this means faith flags, and unbelief getting in, guilt and hardneſs fret and canker the conſcience.—The ſoul in ſuch a ſtate reaſons thus: "If victory over ſin, if holineſs and fruitfulneſs "be the certain evidences of faith, I fear I have "them not. I know well what I ought to be, "and what I would be; but alas! I am "ſuch a poor, ſinful, barren cumberer of the "ground, ſuch an ungrateful backſlider, that I "think the root of the matter is not in me." This is the uſual language of grace (and true gracious language it is) behind the cloud. The man only who knows the law, ſees how far he falls ſhort of its demands: The ſcripture exhortations ſhew us more what we ought to be, than what any attain to. But try the ſecret workings

of thy heart. Doeſt thou conſent unto the law that it is good? Is ſin thy grief and burden, and though it prevail again and again, doeſt thou ſtrive and pray againſt it? doeſt thou love thoſe that are born of God? doeſt thou try, at leaſt, to clothe thyſelf with the whole armour of God? doeſt thou reliſh ſavory experimental preaching? doeſt thou endeavour to fortify thyſelf under thy ſore temptations by ſuch promiſes as theſe: *No weapon formed againſt thee ſhall proſper. When thou paſſeſt through the fires, and through the waters, I will be with thee, &c. I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee. All things ſhall work together for good to thoſe who love God, to thoſe who are the called after his purpoſe?* And when thou prayeſt, though thy prayer ſeem to be ſhut out, and to meet with no anſwer, doeſt thou ſtrengthen thy plea by the examples of the Syro-phenician woman, the importunate widow, the deliverance of Peter out of priſon, the man who requeſted the three loaves, and many other ſcripture examples? Though theſe examples and theſe promiſes may not all have occurred, yet they will be of ſpecial uſe in time of need, and are recorded wholly that they may be ſo.

If ſuch be the workings of thy heart, be aſſured that they proceed from the blowings of the

ſweet

ſweet ſpirit of grace upon thy garden, which, though it may have many foul weeds in it, yet is not without its flowers; *the roſe of Sharon, and lily of the valley* is there: and though the fruits and bloſſoms may be blown off by the nipping blaſts of ſin and temptation, yet there is life in the root, which will ſurely ſprout out again, and endure unto everlaſting life.

Look now at the heart or garden of the natural man, and however decent, formal and moral he may be, it will be juſt like the artificial flower-garden, which was exhibited at Weſtminſter-bridge. It is only to be ſeen of men; beautiful without, in trees, flowers, and fruit; but the trees have no root, the flowers no ſcent nor fragrance, and the fruit is all hollow. As this garden, however, may look more fair to a beholder's eye than a real garden, ſo may the artificial, ſelf-made chriſtian appear to have fewer blemiſhes, more duties, and more outward works of righteouſneſs, than the ſoul which is really God's huſbandry—A man may do a great deal in religion from wrong ends and wrong motives; and where a placid natural diſpoſition, with a freedom from temptations concur, he may be a famous Chriſtian in his own eyes, and in the eyes of the world; but all this while, he may be an utter ſtranger to the faith of God's elect; his heart

heart may be quite unrenewed, and all his fancied goodneſs, in God's ſight, meer pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, proceeding only from ignorance and ſelf-love.

No. XLVII.

WE ſhould account him but an indifferent ſhepherd who ſhould lead his flocks to ſandy deſerts and muddled waters, whilſt there were green paſtures and clear ſtreams at hand for their refreſhment. Yet there are ſome miniſters, who under the idea of being, what they call, *guarded*, are unwilling to truſt God with his own truths, or to give his children their proper bread, for fear the dogs ſhould ſnap at it.

Moſt certainly we cannot be too much on our guard againſt ſin, provided our weapons are taken from God's own arſenal. But ſure it is, that whenſoever the goſpel is ſo haſhed and cooked up that it becomes palatable to the taſte of human wiſdom, it ceaſes to be that goſpel which St. Paul preached.

Two objections eſpecially were brought againſt the doctrines of that apoſtle. Theſe he ſtates, and after giving them their full force, puts in his reply to each.

The

The firſt was againſt the doctrine of unconditional particular election, as making God cruel and unjuſt.

Objection. Thou wilt ſay then, why doth he yet find fault ; for who hath reſiſted his will ?

Anſwer. Nay, but O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God ? Shall the thing formed ſay unto to him that formed it, why hath he made me thus ? Hath not the potter power over the clay to make one veſſel unto honor, another unto diſhonor ?

Objection. Is there unrighteouſneſs with God ?

Anſwer. God forbid ; for how then ſhould God judge the world ?

The ſecond objection was levelled againſt that grand pillar of a ſinner's hope, juſtification by faith only, as if it were a doctrine tending to licentiouſneſs, and to the overthrow of morality and good works.

This, the apoſtle ſays, ſome did not ſcruple to affirm ; but he adds, that the report was ſlanderous. *Rom.* iii. 8.

Objection. Shall we ſin then that grace may abound ?

Anſwer. God forbid. How ſhall we that are dead to ſin, live any longer therein ?

Again. Objection. Do we then make void the law by faith ?

Anſwer.

Anſwer. Nay, we eſtabliſh the law.

Now nothing can be more clear than that if I preach ſuch doctrine as is not liable to theſe cavils of the objector, St. Paul's doctrine and mine are not one and the ſame; and that we cannot both be in the right, is no leſs evident.

But the modern ſyſtem of divinity is not liable to theſe objections; on the contrary, modern divinity is the mother that nouriſhes them againſt the apoſtle's doctrine: *Ergo*, either St. Paul's ſyſtem, or that of modern divinity, muſt be groſsly erroneous.

No. XLVIII.

WHAT will that religion do for me that will not teach me to face death, and to meet that king of terrors with confidence? As a ſinner, I am under condemnation; but, as a believing ſinner, there is no condemnation for me. I am as much out of the reach of the law's curſe as if I had never broken it.—Sin can no more hurt me *(penally)* than if it had never entered into the world.—Death has no more ſting for me, even when I paſs through it's dark vale, than it had for Adam in innocence. The grave has no more power over me than it had over Chriſt himſelf.

Can

Can this be true?—Read, believe, and ſuck the honey of theſe ſcriptures.

There is no condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus. Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.

He hath put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf. He hath aboliſhed death. Yea, he hath deſtroyed him that had the power of death, that is the Devil.

O death, I will be thy plagues. O grave! I will be thy deſtruction,—O death! where is thy ſting? O grave where is thy victory?

The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

No. XLIX.

ALTHOUGH a believer may commit the ſame ſins as an unbeliever, yea greater for the matter of them, as the caſes of Lot, Sampſon, David, Peter, the inceſtuous Corinthian, and others, do awfully evince; yet the believer's perſon, being ſcreened from the curſe of the law, cannot come under condemnation, even though the actings of repentance ſhould be for a time ſuſpended.

ed. But though his perſon cannot be arreſted by the law, on account of Chriſt's having borne all the penalty due to the breach of it, yet is his ſin equally diſpleaſing to God; yea, much more ſo, as having been committed againſt light, grace, and love.

Though this conſideration is of very great uſe to lift up a believer after a fall, it by no means affords him any encouragement to continue in ſin; ſo far from it, that the more he ſees of the pardoning love of Chriſt, ſo much the more odious will ſin appear unto him. Whereas to *ſin that grace may abound*, as it is the doctrine of hell, ſo none but Satan's firſt-rate pupils will ever adopt it.

L.

THE apoſtle bore this teſtimony to the believers of the church of Corinth, that they gave to the poor, not only to the utmoſt of their power, but *even beyond their power*. But there is a certain *cloſe-fiſtedneſs* (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) among too many profeſſors of our day, who ſeem frightened out of their wits when any poor objects are recommended to their notice, inſomuch that their niggardlineſs is even ſeen through

through the muſcles of the countenance, though they generally ſhelter their covetouſneſs under the fear of giving amiſs.—It is true, we are not to encourage idleneſs, and it well becomes us to ſee that our benevolence be not ill-placed; and yet I have frequently thought that if the Lord were to deal with us, and were to beſtow his favors upon us only according to our deſerts, the beſt of us would be very badly off indeed. But he is God and not man.

But Oh! the ſubterfuges which the avarice of the heart will fly too, whilſt yet it is anxious to ſave appearances: "It is peculiarly inconvenient at this time." "Nobody knows how many calls I have lately had." Then a hint ſhall be thrown out, (with a ſeeming wiſh to conceal it) how much has been given upon other occaſions.

After all, it is certain every man is beſt judge of his own abilities to give, as well as of the temper of his own heart in giving: therefore to his own maſter he muſt ſtand or fall. But let none be unmindful of the command given by one apoſtle, nor of the queſtion put by another. *Do good unto all, eſpecially to thoſe who are of the houſehold of faith.—If any man ſee his brother have need and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion againſt him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* In a word, we are ſtewards of all we poſſeſs, and

the Lord will require an account of every talent committed to our charge. May grace enable us to uſe them aright!

LI.

THE key of prayer opens the gate of heaven, and there is not a ſtate which a believer can be in, that there is not deliverance treaſured up for him in Chriſt, which deliverance ſhall be given in the very moment that it is beſt for the believer it ſhould be given. In the mean while, how earneſtly will the ſoul plead with God! How will it ſearch for ſcripture promiſes and ſcripture examples, and bring them to the throne of grace! though perhaps after all it will be ſaying "Surely there never was ſuch a caſe as mine;" "never ſuch a temptation as I am exerciſed with." Granted. Yet it muſt be included in the general promiſe; *there hath no temptation taken you but what is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear, but will, with the temptation alſo, make a way for you to eſcape, that you may be able to bear it.*

"Oh! (ſays the ſoul) but this promiſe is come to an end with regard to me. I have fallen by the

the temptation; I have not been able to bear it; God hath not made a way for me to eſcape." Not perhaps by removing the temptation, nor by preſerving thee altogether from being overcome by it;—ſtill the promiſe is ſure; and though thou may'ſt not eſcape a fall, yea many grievous foul falls, yet thou ſhalt certainly *eſcape ruin*; as the veſſel which is toſſed and battered by ſtorms may ſtill eſcape ſhipwreck. But remember that ſincere prayer is abſolutely incompatible with known ſin, yea with any the leaſt allowed evil. Far be it from me, however, to ſay that the ſoul who prays ſincerely, may not be overcome by the very ſin againſt which he prays; but this I ſay, that he cannot approve the ſin by which he is overcome; his will cannot conſent to it. *The evil that I would not, that I do*, is his language; and when victory over a boſom idol is given, he rejoices and is thankful.

No. LII.

IT is the diſtinguiſhing character of a believer, that he has fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, through the indwelling of the Spirit. Whoſoever has not thus fellowſhip with God, hath fellowſhip with ſin; and fellowſhip with God and fellowſhip with ſin are incompatible. Yet a

believer may have many ſad falls into ſin, without having fellowſhip with it. Grace and nature are inmates in the heart of a renewed man; yet they are juſt like two perſons who dwell under the ſame roof, and are always at variance, they have no *fellowſhip* at all, the one with the other. The regenerate part *cannot ſin, becauſe it is born of God*; the divine ſeed remaineth in the believer uncorrupt and immaculate. *It is no more I, ſays the* apoſtle, *but ſin which dwelleth in me.* Whereas *the carnal mind*, the unregenerate part *is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* On the contrary, *it is enmity againſt him.* It hates holineſs, as being his image. It loves ſin, and nothing but ſin; ſin is not only its law, but itſelf is *a law of ſin* in the abſtract. It is ſleepleſs, reſtleſs, implacable, ever bent upon the ruin of the ſoul in which it dwells; and in the hour of temptation is particularly watchful to ſide with Satan, and to improve the advantage. Such a gueſt, rather ſuch a deſperate foe, does every believer carry in his boſom, which makes him ſo frequently cry out with St. Paul, *O wretched man that I am*; though at the very ſame time it is his privilege to exult with the ſame apoſtle and ſay, *I thank God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

No. LIII.

THERE is not a believer in the world, who does not wiſh to have the government to remain in the Lord's hands, and who cannot at all times ſay, " thy will be done ;" I ſay *at all times*, for even at thoſe ſeaſons, when ſelf-will is moſt at work, the believer wiſhes ſelf to be dethroned, and acknowledges it to be right, that ſo it ſhould be. Now ſin directly ſtrikes at the moral government of God, therefore in the very nature of things, ſin and the believer muſt be at continual war ; and though the poor believer may get many a deep wound in his various battles againſt that curſed triple alliance, the world, the fleſh and the devil ; (as often the braveſt and moſt faithful ſoldier ſhall get the moſt bloody ſcars) yet the combat is ſure to end glorioufly, and he ſhall not only be conqueror, but *more than conqueror, through him that hath loved him.*

No. LIV.

A STATE of ſin and a ſtate of faith are directly oppoſite ; where ſin reigns, unbelief is at

the root; and where ſin's dominion is broken, Chriſt dwells in the heart by faith: nevertheleſs ſin may reign where there is a very fine outſide, and grace may reign where there is much corruption, yea, many out-breakings of it.

No. LV.

NOTHING tends to lay the ſoul ſo low as believing views of Chriſt; conſequently ſo far is aſſurance from begetting pride, that the moſt aſſured Chriſtian is the moſt humble Chriſtian.

Nothing tends to promote holineſs and good works but faith, therefore the Chriſtian who has moſt aſſurance, will always be the moſt holy and the moſt fruitful Chriſtian.

No LVI.

IT is the glory of the Goſpel, that it ſets the believer free from all condemnation, whether from the law, ſin, death, hell or the grave: and that none of his tranſgreſſions, however great and aggravated, or whether before or after his converſion, ſhall ever be laid to his charge; ſeeing that they were

were all laid upon Chriſt in the everlaſting covenant, and blotted out by him even before they were committed. Let thoſe who would cavil at this aſſertion, firſt try the truth of it; and let them conſider how they will get peace to their troubled conſciences any other way: perhaps there may come a time when they will be glad to embrace it. If they ſeek to obtain peace more or leſs in proportion as they keep or break the law, they are quite out of God's way of arriving at it, for he has ordained that peace ſhall never come by *doing* but by *believing*; for *the law, as a miniſtration of condemnation worketh wrath*; but, *being juſtified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; and *the God of hope fills his people with joy and peace in believing:* but if the ſins of all the elect were not laid upon Chriſt at once, if they were not all blotted out at once, if they were not all pardoned at once (whether paſt, preſent, or to come) how or when will they be taken away and pardoned? Is Chriſt again to deſcend from Heaven for this purpoſe? Or, does he diſpenſe his pardons, one by one, like the Pope of Rome?—The *knowledge* of forgiveneſs of ſins, it is true, is brought to the ſoul by believing; but pardon itſelf (at leaſt the ground of pardon) is of the ſame date with the grace and love of Jehovah to his people; It has no depen-

dependance whatever on any thing in the creature, or that ever would be in the creature, whether of good to procure it, or of evil to prevent it. The motives of the eternal mind are in itſelf: *He ordereth all things after the counſel of his own will*, this will is immutable; it knoweth neither obſtacle nor controul. *I will work, and who ſhall let? With him is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning. I the Lord change not, therefore, the ſons of Jacob are not conſumed.*

When *the everlaſting covenant* was planned between the three perſons in the glorious and coequal Trinity, it was *ordered in all things and ſure*; all the ſpiritual ſeed were then choſen in Chriſt their head, and grace was given them in him as members of his myſtical body: all the ſins that ever they ſhould commit, with every aggravation with which they ſhould be ſwelled, were taken into the account; payment was then *virtually* made, and, it was *actually* made when Jeſus hung on the accurſed tree; and all the powers of earth and hell combined can never charge one ſin upon the ſoul for whom it was ſo paid and accepted: for *who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Still the poor awakened ſinner will be crying, "Oh! if I had not gone ſuch lengths in ſin; Oh! "if I had but turned a little ſooner; Oh! if I had "not fallen ſo and ſo, I might then have hoped

"for

" for acceptance. But now I am ſo vile, ſurely " the Lord will have no mercy on me."

How contrary is all this to God's method of Salvation, by Grace! but the Lord, in his due time, will beat the poor ſoul off from theſe legal ſelf-righteous reaſonings; and teach it *to live by the faith of the ſon of God, a life hid with Chriſt in God*; and this is the only way to be crucified unto the world, and to get victory over ſin, and to make holineſs the delight and element of the ſoul; nor can the believer have *acceſs with boldneſs* to the throne of grace, but as he ſees every impediment and bar to his approach, removed by Chriſt Jeſus, and all his enemies under the feet of the captain of his ſalvation.

No. LVII.

MANY ſincere ſouls are diſtreſſed becauſe they think they have let the day of grace ſlip; theſe fears are good marks of that grace which they think they have not; but the idea itſelf has no foundation in ſcripture; for, *Firſt*, reprobates have no day of grace, which, if improved, they would be ſaved; if neglected, they are loſt. *Secondly*, the elect, however long they may have reſiſted, are aſſuredly brought to God in his own time, and

in

in his own way; or, as the 17th article of the church of England, on *predeſtination and election*, well expreſſes it, *by his ſpirit working in due ſeaſon.* Their reſiſtance is no bar to the arm of omnipotence, nor can it for a moment retard *the time of love.*—*They* ſhall *be a willing people in the day of his power.*

No. LVIII.

SOME well-meaning miniſters of Chriſt are too apt to tell poor weak, toſſed, tempted chriſtians, that their doubts and fears are ſinful, and that they diſhonor God. This is *bruiſing the broken reed, and quenching the ſmoaking flame.* Unbelief is certainly a ſin, a ſtate of ſin, yea it is the ſin of ſins, for it is that which alone can damn the ſoul; but this is, by no means, the kind of unbelief that heavy leaden, afflicted ſouls complain of, and groan under, when convinced of ſin by the ſpirit, whoſe very doubts and fears evidence that they are in covenant with God, and have already *the faith of his own elect*, though they want ſuch a degree of it as to make them comfortable in their own conſciences; but if there was no faith, there would be no doubting, for theſe two are at once working in the heart, the one oppoſing the actings of the other,

other, ſo that my very fears that I have not faith, prove that I have it, as much as the bubblings and boiling of water in a furnace, prove the exiſtence and the acting of the fire that is under it.

To ſay, that doubts and fears are ſinful, is not the way to remove them, but to increaſe them, inaſmuch as the ſincere ſoul will fear more and more by thinking it has more ſin to anſwer for: Beſides, did any chriſtian ever arrive at the ſunſhine of ſolid peace and aſſurance, but through clouds of doubts and fears? Tell me, ye that give vinegar and gall to bruiſed ſouls, by repreſenting their doubts and fears, as adding to their guilt; did our Bleſſed Saviour ever hold this language? view him all the while he was upon earth, and you ſhall never hear him ſpeak a diſcouraging word to the weak in faith, but always the contrary.

Laſly. If doubts and fears are traced to their origin, no culpable unbelief, no conſent of the will will ever be found at the bottom of them, but real faith will always be diſcovered at their root; for why does the ſoul fear at all? but becauſe it believes the truth of God's word, as threatning puniſhment and condemnation on account of its tranſgreſſions of the law. And why does the ſoul doubt?—Not becauſe it diſbelieves the promiſes therein contained; but, becauſe

becauſe ſeeing its own ſin and depravity, and God's holineſs and purity, and not having clear views of the Lord's method of juſtifying the ungodly, without money, and without price, it diſtreſſes and perplexes itſelf, with the notion, that its great vileneſs is a bar to the mercy of God. Nature muſt, in a manner, be reverſed, and turned topſy turvy before this great ſcriptural truth will be received, viz: that *ſin, not goodneſs, qualifies every perſon for the Goſpel Salvation.*

The verity of the promiſes then is not queſtioned by the feeble doubting Chriſtian; but what he doubts and fears is, that he himſelf has no intereſt in them; and ſo far is Chriſt from being diſpleaſed with ſuch weaklings, that his bowels yearn with a more than common tenderneſs over them; as a good ſhepherd, *he carries ſuch lambs in his boſom, and gently leads thoſe that are with young.*

Is this pleading for unbelief? Is it apologizing for doubts and fears? By no means: but the plea or apology is for that grain of true faith, which, like a living ſpark in the aſhes, often lies ſmothered under the clog of unbelief, and under the weight of many ſuſpicions and miſgivings as to its ſtate Godwards.—*Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief*, ſhould be the Chriſtian's cry in ſuch a ſtate.

No. LIX.

No. LIX.

EVERY believer generally ſees in the courſe of his experience, that thoſe very trials or temptations which he moſt feared, and perhaps which he moſt prayed againſt, are thoſe very bleſſings in God's over-ruling hand, which he will be thankful for throughout eternity.

No. LX.

IT is not to be wondered that Hazael, who knew nothing of his own heart, ſhould ſay, "Is thy ſervant a dog that he ſhould do this thing;" but the ſelf-confidence of Peter was extraordinary, when he ſaid "Lord though all men ſhall deny thee, yet will not I." Oh how little do many of the Lord's deareſt people know what will befall them before they reach the end of their pilgrimage! When temptation is at a diſtance, and all goes on ſmoothly, we are too apt to think more highly of ourſelves than we ought to think; but let a ſtrong temptation work upon a ſuitable corruption in the heart, (Satan and opportunity

blowing up the flame,) and there is no ſaying what may happen. It was well obſerved by that evangelical divine, Mr. John Hill, that "heed ought to be taken by the beſt of ſaints againſt the worſt of ſins." *Watch and pray* therefore *that ye enter not into temptation.* And *let him that thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.* But if thou haſt fallen, let not thy ſin drive thee to deſpair, but to Chriſt, that thou may'ſt be delivered both from its guilt and power.

LXI.

I HAVE often been grieved to perceive ſo very little of the chriſtian ſpirit and temper in many perſons, of whoſe converſion we cannot well doubt. Envy, malice, hatred, uncharitableneſs, evil ſurmiſings, ſwellings, whiſperings, backbitings, &c. are ranked by inſpiration itſelf, in the catalogue of the fouleſt offences; and yet we often ſee ſoaring profeſſors too much, alas! under the power of theſe evils, ſitting in judgment perhaps upon a poor fallen believer, who may have been overtaken with a fault, or raſhly cenſuring their brethren, even for things in themſelves indifferent.

It

It would be well if ſuch perſons would read the 13th chapter of St. Paul's firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, and aſk themſelves, Have I this divine grace of charity or love, which envieth not, which thinketh no evil, which is not eaſily provoked, which vaunteth not herſelf, which ſeeketh not her own, which is not puffed up, but like the wiſdom which cometh from above, is gentle and eaſy to be intreated? Without this I am nothing but ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal.

Lord, evermore give me this grace! O let me be much at home! Let me ſearch and ranſack every corner of my deceitful heart, leſt after all my profeſſion, I fall ſhort and come to nothing.

O my ſoul, is this thy prayer? yea, is it thy earneſt wiſh and endeavor to know, feel and experience the full extent of the apoſtle's words, when he ſays, *now abideth theſe three, faith, hope and charity; but the greateſt of theſe is charity!*

Still, under a miſtaken notion of charity, I am not to put out my eyes, and to call evil good, and good evil. But I am to judge favorably whenever I can; and I am alſo to remember that he who ſtands to-day may fall to-morrow, and that who falls to-day may riſe to-morrow.

No. LXII.

WHEN an impertinent, troubleſome viſiter knocks at the door and craves admiſſion, the good man of the houſe uſually denies himſelf. He is not at home to ſuch company: the fellow may go about his buſineſs.

So ſhould the believer always deal with ſin when it ſtands knocking at the door of the heart. He muſt not begin parlying, but give it a flat denial: he muſt be at home to no ſuch gueſt. To ſtand and argue is to let it halfway in.

But when Jeſus knocks and ſays "Open to me, my beloved," it muſt be juſt the contrary.

No. LXIII.

THERE is no time of a believer's experience in which he does not look upon ſin as the greateſt evil, and God as his greateſt good. Even in the moment that he is ſo overborne by temptation as to chooſe the evil and refuſe the good, ſtill his judgment is not changed; and he ſays "the good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do."

No. LXIV.

No. LXIV.

THERE are thoſe who cry out, "O I don't trouble myſelf about abſtruſe and diſputed points of doctrine, give me our Saviour's ſermon upon the mount!" yet bring them to the teſt of this ſermon, and you will hear them call poverty of ſpirit, meanneſs; mourning for ſin, folly and weakneſs; hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſs, enthuſiaſm and being righteous overmuch; yea they will tell you that all perſecution for righteouſneſs ſake was confined to primitive times; and that it is uncharitable to affirm that ſtrait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and that there are but few that find it.

No. LXV.

THOSE perſons and thoſe things which we have made our idols, God very frequently makes our plagues and our croſſes.

No. LXVI.

WHOSOEVER knows what ſin is, and what Chriſt is, that man is wiſe in God's account, whatſoever elſe he may be ignorant of.

Whoſoever knows not himſelf as a ſinner, nor Chriſt as a Savior, is a fool in God's account, whatever elſe he may be acquainted with, and however wiſe he may be in the world's eſtimation. No human ſcience can teach a ſoul the evil of ſin. Nor can all the learning in the world comfort a diſtreſſed conſcience.

No. LXVII.

WATCHFULNESS will not avail without prayer, nor prayer without watchfulneſs. *Watch* and *pray*, ſaith our Lord.

No. LXVIII.

IT is a good obſervation of the worthy Doctor Fuller, in his Church Hiſtory, that "thoſe are the beſt Chriſtians who are more careful to reform themſelves than to cenſure others."

It is however a ſmall thing to be judged of man's judgment. The world, it muſt be expected, will be void of charity towards God's people, and judge them as fools, hypocrites, enthuſiaſts, evil-deſigning, turbulent perſons, and what not; but it is much to be lamented that the children of grace ſhould judge one another ſo raſhly as we often ſee them do: and this unhappy

ſpirit

ſpirit of cenſure is very apt to vent itſelf from perſons in a lower ſtation of life towards thoſe whom it may have pleaſed God to place in a ſituation and ſphere of life quite different from or above their own, which renders them very incompetent judges of thoſe things of which they ſet themſelves up to be cenſurers. I would not ſay that envy or ſpiritual pride, nor even a narrow, illiberal way of thinking are always the parents of this temper; I have ſeen it in honeſt ſimple-hearted ſouls, who are too apt to run away with appearances without examining things to the bottom; and I know how to make allowances for it: however, if ſuch perſons would turn their eyes within, they would there perhaps find much more cauſe for humiliation and condemnation than there is in a chearful countenance, or in living according to the rank and ſtation which a gracious and wiſe Providence has appointed us; by which means multitudes are ſupported, employed and kept from idleneſs, who otherwiſe muſt ſteal, ſtarve, or become burdenſome to pariſhes.

But let thoſe highly favoured few among the great or rich, whom grace has diſtinguiſhed from others, always remember 1*ſt*. That the uſe of abundance, without the abuſe of it, is an hard but needful leſſon. 2*dly*. That ſin in any ſtation is alike diſpleaſing to God. And 3*dly*. That he who ventures

ventures to the utmoſt brink of his liberty, will be in danger of going beyond it. *Let their moderation* therefore *be known unto all men.* Let them remember too, that though feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, viſiting the ſick, and employing the poor to work, are diſtinguiſhing branches of real charity, yet that the cauſe of Chriſt, and the faithful miniſters of the goſpel, (eſpecially thoſe with ſcanty pay and large families) have the firſt claim on their abundance: and that although in caſes of public charities our works muſt needs be ſeen before men, and indeed ought to be ſo, yet here there is no occaſion that even the left hand ſhould know what the right hand doeth, much leſs ſhould it be blazoned abroad in the world: ſeaſonable donations to poor godly labourers in the Lord's vineyard (and truly ſuch are commonly *poor* enough) eſpecially when thoſe donations come unexpected, are often received as boons from above, and indeed are ſo when given for the goſpel's ſake, and ſhall in no wiſe loſe their reward.

Here then a Chriſtian may be often doing that very liberally, which an uncharitable profeſſor may be cenſuring him for not doing at all. But God knoweth the heart, and knoweth all things.

I ſay therefore both to high and low, to rich and poor: *Judge not that ye be not judged.*

Rather

Rather put on that *charity* which *hopeth all things*, and which *thinketh no evil.*

Lord, evermore give thy children this temper one towards another.

No. LXIX.

A TRUE Saint may be a grievous backſlider in practice, but he cannot be a backſlider in principle. He would do good according according to the law in his mind, even when evil is preſent with him through the law of ſin which is in his members: but the force of corruption is ſo violent, that he is brought into captivity to that law of ſin, and by its tyranny holden down in ſpight of all his groans and ſtruggles for deliverance, which however in the uſe of the appointed means he ſhall moſt aſſuredly obtain in the Lord's own time. Yea, *though a troop may overcome him* (like Gad) *he ſhall overcome at the laſt.*

It is not ſo with the backſlider in heart. His falls into ſin cauſe him to depart from the appearances he might have of grace, till at at laſt he falls from all profeſſion. The ſin that he commits he even approves in his heart, though natural conſcience, till quite ſeared, may at times give him ſome uneaſy ſenſations. All his falls into ſin drive him further and further from God, whereas thoſe of true

believers

believers cauſe them to flee to Chriſt for ſtrength, and to walk more warily for the future.

No. LXX.

TO a believing ſoul there is ſomething wonderfully ſweet in viewing all his trials, troubles, afflictions, temptations, deſertions, ſpiritual conflicts, ups and downs of every kind as ordered of God for his good; decreed to come upon him juſt at ſuch a time and place as his heavenly father's wiſdom ſees fit and meet; to remain with him juſt ſo long and not a ſingle moment longer than till they ſhall have anſwered ſome ſalutary purpoſe for his ſoul's good; that however ſore and grievous theſe things may be to fleſh and blood, however thwarting to his own will and wiſhes, yea however contrary to what he would judge to be for his ſpiritual welfare; yet he who ordereth all things after the counſel of his own will, cauſeth them to work together for his good, and that they are all the effects and emanations of infinite wiſdom, infinite love, and infinite power united to accompliſh his ſalvation in the way that ſhall be beſt for him, and moſt for his heavenly father's glory.

No. LXXI.

THE ſcripture hath given ſeven reaſons (which in the ſacred writings is a perfect and compleat number) for the practice of good works. Yet ſuch is the pride and ignorance of man that he will needs add *an eighth*, though this eighth reaſon turns all good works into bad ones, impeaches God's wiſdom, and makes the blood of Chriſt of none effect.

The ſcripture reaſons for the performance of good works are the following:

1.

THEY are commanded by God himſelf.—Tit. iii. 8. This is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.

2.

God's people are predeſtinated, choſen and born again in Chriſt Jeſus for this very purpoſe.—Eph. ii. 10. We are his workmanſhip, created anew in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.

3. Good

3.

Good works are the external evidences of true living faith here, and will be ſo at the day of judgment; according to which a reward of grace will be given. Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.—I will ſhew thee my faith by my works. Jam. ii. 17, 18, &c. For the Son of Man ſhall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then ſhall he reward every man according to his works. Mat. xvi 27.

See alſo Mat. xxv. from v. 31 to the end of the chapter.

4.

The love of Chriſt to us as ſinners excites us to the practice of them, yea to be *zealous* for them.

2 Cor. v. 14. For the love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.

John, xvi. 15. If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Tit. ii. 14. He gave himſelf for us to purify to himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works.

5.

The example of Chriſt and his apoſtles teacheth and enforceth them.

Acts,

Acts, x. 38. Jeſus of Nazareth went about doing good.

1 Cor. xi. 1. Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.

6.

When performed from right motives and to right ends, they tend to glorify God.

Mat. v. 16. Let your light ſo ſhine before men that they may ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

7

They are for the profit and advantage of our fellow creatures, and of our fellow Chriſtians.

Gal. vi. 10. Do good unto all, eſpecially to thoſe who are of the houſehold of faith.

Tit. iii. 8. Theſe things (good works) are good and profitable unto men.—See alſo Jam. ii. 14, 15, 16.

1 John iii. 17. Whoſo hath this world's good, and ſeeth his brother have need, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

Theſe are the ſcripture reaſons for the practice of good works, yet vain man who would ſet up to be wiſer than his maker, would be thruſting in another uſe for good works which he thinks preferable to all the reſt, though in fact it tends to

ſubvert and defeat the whole goſpel plan of ſalvation, *namely*, to recommend us to the favor of God, either in whole or in part, or at leaſt to ſerve as conditions of our juſtification and acceptance. Thus teach all the Papiſts. Thus teach too many who are called Proteſtants, in direct oppoſition to the word of God, and to the confeſſions of all the reformed churches, particulary to the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th articles of the church of England.

No. LXXII.

IN order that no poor convinced ſinner may deſpair of mercy, there is no ſin that ever was, or can be commited (the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt excepted, which none have committed who are willing to be ſaved in the goſpel way) which ſome that are now in glory have not been guilty of. Murderers, adulterers, inceſtuous perſons, abuſers of themſelves with mankind, drunkards thieves, extortioners, revilers and deniers of Chriſt, ſwell the liſt of thoſe who are waſhed, ſanctified and juſtified in the name of our Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit of our God.

Nay more, there is perhaps not a ſin which can be thought of, that ſome of God's eminent

ſcripture

ſcripture ſaints have not fallen into after their converſion, though through grace they have been enabled to renew the actings of their faith and repentance, and are now ſinging before the throne " unto him that hath loved and redeemed them, and that hath waſhed them from their ſins in his own blood."

And for fear any ſhould ſtill object againſt themſelves, " oh but my ſins are of ſuch a nature, that ſurely no ſaved ſoul was ever guilty of the like ;" our Lord himſelf ſays that *all manner of ſin and wickedneſs ſhall be forgiven.* And the beloved John aſſures us that *the blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin.*

Now let the whole ſelf-righteous tribe of formaliſts murmur at theſe glorious diſplays of invincible grace, as their forefather Simon the Phariſee did of old, when the poor, ſinful, penitent Mary waſhed our Savior's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head ; ſtill it muſt ever ſtand upon record, that the debtor to whom five hundred pence was forgiven, loved more than he did to whom only fifty pence was forgiven ; and that publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before the generation of thoſe who are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not cleanſed from their filthineſs.

No. LXXIII.

MANY ſincere ſouls, who are truly converted to God, are apt to think that ſurely perſons who have run ſuch lengths in ſin as they have, ought never to expect the ſame degrees of ſenſible comfort and communion with God, as others may enjoy, who have not reſiſted ſo many calls of love, nor ſinned with ſo high an hand as themſelves; eſpecially if they have been notorious backſliders, although now through grace renewed again unto repentance, are they apt to cheriſh theſe legal reaſonings, ſo contrary to the whole goſpel plan, ſo derogatory to the honor of Chriſt, and ſo deſtructive to the ſoul's peace. Their language is juſt this:

Had I owed only fifty pence, Jeſus would have forgiven me more *frankly*, and I might have expected more manifeſtations of his love than I can hope for, who am a poor five hundred pence debtor, and who have nothing at all to pay." Again: "I have contracted great and heavy debts ſince my converſion. I am a grievous backſlider; and though I now deſire to repent of my ſins, and turn to the Lord with all my heart, I fear he will not receive me graciouſly. At leaſt, if he

he does reſtore me to his favor, I muſt go halting, and walk in darkneſs all my days, without ever feeling his ſweet ſenſible preſence in my ſoul." Alas, poor creature! has the Lord ſaid that he is married to his backſliding children, and doth he urge his relationſhip of an huſband to them as the motive of their return to him; (Jer. iii. 14.) and will he not receive them when they do return? Has he promiſed to *heal their backſlidings, and to love them freely?* (Hoſea, xiv. 4.) and will he be worſe than his word? Has he told us to forgive a repenting brother not only until ſeven times, but until ſeventy times ſeven; and will he who is God, and not man, do leſs? Did the long forſaken father fall upon the returning prodigal ſon's neck and kiſs him; and will not thy heavenly Father and bridegroom, whoſe compaſſions are infinite, embrace thee in the arms of his love, and *kiſs thee with the kiſſes of his mouth?* Cant. i. 2.—ii. 6. Yea, he will, he will. Seek him then, though thick dark clouds of deſertion, and though mountains of ſin and corruption would impede thy way. Seek him in the uſe of all means, yet truſting to none.

Whate'er's thy huſband at thy beſt,
He's at thy worſt the ſame:
And in his love will ever reſt,
Jehovah is his name.

GOSPEL SONNETS.

No. LXXIV.

SIN is the the diſeaſe of the renewed ſoul; but it is the element of the natural man.

No. LXXV.

THOUGH Chriſt has reconciled ſinners to himſelf, yet it is abſolutely impoſſible for any Chriſtian to be reconciled to ſin.

No. LXXVI.

IT is not poſſible for a believer to be contented with his preſent attainments. It is the grand proof of a renewed mind that it fights vigorouſly againſt all ſin inward as well as outward, that it deſires, yea pants to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jeſus Chriſt; that it hungers and thirſts after righteouſneſs; that it longs to lay itſelf out for the glory of God, and to abound more and more in every good word and work.

Where

Where this is not the caſe, faith is not: and where faith is not, Chriſt is not; and where Chriſt is not, Satan muſt be.

No. LXXVII.

WHEN God elected his people in Chriſt and reconciled them to himſelf in him, he foreſaw all the evil that would be in them both before and after their converſion; and if this did not prevent his chooſing them and calling them, it never can be the cauſe of his caſting them off.

No. LXXVIII.

THOUGH aſſurance be the privilege of all God's people, it is by no means the lot of all. Nevertheleſs it is the duty of all to preſs after it.

Aſſurance is the higheſt degree of faith, and faith being the root of holineſs, as faith prevails holineſs and deadneſs to the world will prevail; for this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Peter's aſſurance gave way, and he fell foully. But Chriſt prayed that his faith might not fail, and he fell not finally.

If,

If, as ſome affirm, aſſurance begets a careleſs walk, then the moſt deſirable ſtate a Chriſtian can be in would be that of deſpair, as being the direct oppoſite to aſſurance; and the prayer of the apoſtles "Lord increaſe our faith," ſhould be turned into "Lord increaſe our unbelief, and diminiſh our faith," leſt it grow into aſſurance, and we ſhould thereby be emboldened to commit iniquity with greedineſs."

But the ſoul that really enjoys aſſurance knows how to prize that precious jewel, and will walk as humbly and as warily, as he who being clearly and richly attired would pick his way upon a plank over ſome dirty road, leſt he ſhould ſlip aſide, and defile his garments.

No. LXXIX.

THE dead ſinner partakes of two natures; or at leaſt of two parts of one nature. Half beaſt, half devil.

The glorified ſaint partakes only of one nature, viz. the divine.

A regenerate believer partakes of all the three; but though the remnants of the beaſt and devil are yet in him, he is denominated by that which bears the rule and aſcendency; and therefore the apoſtle

apoſtle addreſſes ſuch as being *partakers of the divine nature* only.

No. LXXX.

IT is one of the firſt and cleareſt truths in the Bible that a believer hates ſin, and becauſe he hates ſin, he muſt love the law. But it is no leſs true, that the moſt advanced believer knows, feels and laments that he loves ſin, and that he continually carries that about with him which is not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

It is not ſcriptural to ſay that he hates ſin ſo far as he is regenerate, though the phraſe be a common one: that expreſſion *ſo far* ſeems rather to imply an amendment of *the old man* than a *putting on the new*. The truth is, that every believer has a perfect old nature, and a perfect new nature, both fighting together within him. When he commits ſin, it is not becauſe his new nature is not yet compleat, nor becauſe his old nature is but in part deſtroyed, but becauſe the old man is forever reſtleſs, and ſtriving to recover the entire maſtery he once had over the believer: but in the end he muſt yield, and even now though he never ceaſes to fight, yet he never gains the dominion.

minion. The renewed will is an impregnable caſtle which almighty grace enables to hold out againſt the combined aſſaults of ſin, Satan and the world. The believer then is always compleatly holy in his new nature, for God's workmanſhip muſt be perfect. He is compleatly unholy in his old nature, for *in him, that in his fleſh there dwelleth no good thing.* Theſe two are waging perpetual war in the ſoul, ſeeing what the one loves the other hates, and *vice versâ.* But the law of grace muſt finally triumph over the law of ſin: during this deſperate combat, all the believer's confidence is in Chriſt, in whom he is always compleat, and in whom he has ſuch a righteouſneſs, as neither the law, ſin, death, hell or the grave can ſully or find fault with.

No. LXXXI.

THE man that has leaſt ſin has not always moſt grace. Great grace is uſually given to fight againſt great corruptions. Few have known more ſin or more grace than David.

No. XCII.

No. LXXXII.

ST. PAUL, like a wiſe maſter-builder, having laid the foundation of a guilty ſinner's hope on Chriſt alone, raiſes thereon the ſuperſtructure of holineſs and walking with God; and, at the cloſe of his epiſtles, gives the warmeſt exhortations to the practice of every relative and ſocial duty: it has therefore often been matter of aſtoniſhment to me to behold ſo many golden, or perhaps I ought rather to ſay *gilded* profeſſors paying ſo little attention to theſe exhortations. One has very unſubdued tempers; another is a rigid cruel parent; a third is a ſtubborn undutiful child; a fourth is a ſurly Nabal of an huſband; a fifth an idle, goſſiping, tatling wife; a ſixth an hard tyrannical maſter or peeviſh miſtreſs, never pleaſed and always changing his or her ſervants; a ſeventh is a negligent, waſteful, eye ſervant, ſaucy, pert anſwering again, running about from one profeſſor to another to carry about family news, and to expoſe the real and imaginary faults of thoſe with whom they live. Laſtly, and which is worſt of all, an eighth, is a miniſter that ought never to be ſeen but in the pulpit.

Oh, my ſoul, how grievous, and yet how common

mon are theſe things! ſurely ſuch perſons have much reaſon to queſtion the reality of their converſion, ſince lying, ſtealing, ſabbath-breaking, and all manner of profaneneſs cannot be more oppoſite to the true ſpirit of Chriſtianity than ſuch diſpoſitions and ſuch practices. I know indeed it is too much the manner of ſome to run down all exhortations to obedience and to holy walking as legal, but I would always wiſh to proclaim as on the houſe top, that he only who liveth near to God and keepeth his conſcience tender and void of offence, has any ſolid proof of his intereſt in Chriſt; and that the man who is not watchful in life, has awful reaſon to tremble at the approach of death, leſt the hope with which he has buoyed himſelf up, (perhaps under a towering profeſſion, and a critical knowledge of goſpel doctrines,) ſhould after all turn out only the hope of the hypocrite which ſhall periſh.

No. LXXXIII.

WHEN a believer reads the character of a true Chriſtian in the ſacred pages, he ſees his own ſhort comings in every grace; and is deeply humbled under the ſenſe of them.—This is right. But he

he ſhould remember that the ſcripture exhortations rather call believers to what they ought to be than what any arrive to. There can be no rule of right or wrong but the will of God; therefore, when believers are excited to holineſs, it muſt be to that which is perfect, elſe the law immediately gives way to the frailty of the creature. The language of ſcripture is in this wiſe, *be ye holy, for I am holy: be perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* And indeed it could not be otherwiſe, without running in the following ſtrain, which it would be almoſt blaſphemous to ſuppoſe; "be ye a little holy and a little ſinful:" "be like your Father which is in heaven, but not too like."

Hence we ſee the abſurdity and impiety of what ſome call *a remedial law of grace.* We ſee alſo that a believer in view of his imperfections and ſhort comings, will at once find cauſe both for humiliation and for conſolation; for *humiliation,* in that he feels that ſin cleaves to, and poiſons all his beſt actions; the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, ſo that he cannot do the things that he would; and his language in his beſt ſtate muſt be, *not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect.* For *conſolation,* in that God views him more according to what he would be, than what he is; and

that though he is nothing but ſin and imperfection in himſelf, he is always compleat in Chriſt, who of God is made unto him wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption.

No. LXXXIV.

THE true meaning of the word repentance is a change of mind; and how can this be accompliſhed without faith? and how can faith exiſt without juſtification? Genuine repentance then with its meet fruits flowing from Chriſt, and being the effect of the ſoul's union with and intereſt in him, is the certain proof that the ſoul has received mercy, though neither repentance nor any other grace, but, on the contrary, only ſinfulneſs, fits and prepares for mercy. To place repentance before reconciliation, or to affirm that it is preparatory thereto, is (as already noticed) to put the effect before the cauſe, and to look for fruit on the tree before it is either planted or ingrafted. It is moreover to eſtabliſh the Romiſh doctrine of grace of congruity, which our Reformers, in the 13th article of religion, have ſo expreſsly borne their teſtimony againſt. Indeed it is to preach another goſpel than what Paul preached. Yet it is amazing how incautiouſly ſome pious and good men

men have expreſſed themſelves on this point. Again. Repentance, being a change of mind, cannot be eradicated from the believer by any falls into ſin, ſince the renewed mind hates the ſin which the believer falls into. His ſtate God-ward is not affected by his falls, though his peace will be much affected; ſeeing he as much is out of his proper element under the prevalence and out-breakings of corruption, as a fiſh would be out of its element if you were to take it out of the ſea and lay it in the ſun-beams: the poor fiſh jumps and flounders about, and is wretched till it get into the water again; ſo will the poor fallen believer ſtrive and ſtruggle hard till he finds himſelf brought into his own element, which is holineſs. An animal, whoſe nature is cleanly, a ſheep for inſtance, may undoubtedly fall into the mire; but a ſheep cannot delight himſelf in the mire into which he falls, but will pant, bleat and ſtruggle till the ſhepherd come and help him out. One of Chriſt's ſheep may fall foully into dirt and filth, but the cleanly nature will ſhew itſelf by inceſſant cryings and exertions till deliverance be obtained.

It is not ſo with a ſwine. Its nature being filthy, it delights in filth; and though you may waſh it again and again, it has no real enjoyment but what it finds in mud and naſtineſs.—This is juſt the caſe with every natural man.

It may be objected that repentance in ſcripture is put before faith "Repent ye and believe the goſpel." But when both are neceſſary, the order in which they are mentioned is no proof at all which of theſe bleſſings firſt takes place in the ſoul. Sanctification is mentioned by St. Paul previous to juſtification, "but ye are ſanctified, ye are juſtified;"* yet no one (I mean none but a blind Formaliſt, or a Papiſt) will affirm that any ſoul is made holy before it has pardon through blood of Chriſt. In like manner, in the Revelation, calling is placed before choice, "called and choſen;" yet every Chriſtian knows that we are called becauſe we are elected, and not called firſt and elected afterwards.

But whenever the ſcripture ſpeaks of repentance as a turning of the heart to God, then it is always placed ſubſequent to faith "Many believed and turned to the Lord." By faith in the exceeding great and precious promiſes, we are made partakers of a divine nature. However, if we conſider repentance in a double point of view, viz. as legal and evangelical, it will readily be granted that the firſt of theſe, which is more properly attrition than contrition, precedes faith, or rather the ſoul's own knowledge of faith, for there muſt

* 1 Cor. vi. 11. See alſo 2 Theſſ. ii. 13. Where ſanctification of the Spirit is placed before belief of the truth.

be

be a degree of faith to put the ſoul on flight to Chriſt. But true, ingenuous, melting repentance is the fruit of advanced faith; and even the higher the ſoul raiſes towards full unclouded aſſurance, and towards that love that caſteth out fear, ſo much the more genuine will its humiliations be on account of ſin.

No. LXXXV.

IF the whole body of the elect were choſen in Chriſt from eternity, and if grace was given them in him before the foundations of the world, then all the ſpiritual ſeed muſt have been conſidered as members of Chriſt, the ſecond Adam, and one with him, when the eternal counſel of peace was made with him their glorious head, (as much as they were conſidered in Adam at the time of his apoſtacy in Paradiſe;) and every bleſſing which they ſhould enjoy in time, was then made ſure to all the ſeed, without any reſpect to good or evil in them; or whether viewed in the pure or in the corrupt maſs, which ſeems a needleſs diſtinction, though much conteſted by ſome great and good men, ſeeing all things are preſent with the eternal mind of Jehovah: and every event which concerns God's Church and people from the creation of the world to the end of it, even

that greateſt of all tranſactions, the crucifixion of Chriſt, is but the manifeſtation of the glory of that wonderful covenant, which is ordered in all things and ſure; and which will have its final accompliſhment when the number of the elect ſhall be called in, and every member of the church militant join thoſe of the church triumphant in ſinging "Worthy is the Lamb," &c. &c.

No. LXXXVI.

THE belief of final perſeverance is an excellent ſpur to make a believer humble, holy, active, as well as to raiſe him up after falls and backſlidings, and this upon the apoſtolic principle, *knowing that his labor ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.*—Whereas the man who knows himſelf, and ſees the ſtrength of his enemies, would lie down and deſpair if he did not believe the promiſe that *he who hath begun the good work in him will perfect it unto the day of Jeſus Chriſt.*

No. LXXXVII.

IT frequently happens that when a child of God has experienced the ſweetneſs of any promiſe, or ſeen and taſted ſomething of the glory of

of Chriſt in any particular text of ſcripture, that afterwards he will be turning to the ſame promiſe, or to the ſame portion of holy writ, the taſte of which he had found ſo precious to his ſoul; but alas! the ſavour may be evaporated, and he himſelf may have no more reliſh for what he ſo lately found as honey and the honeycomb. Now what is the reaſon of this, ſince the promiſe is the ſame; Chriſt is the ſame; and the believer's intereſt in both is always the ſame?—It is certainly owing to the ſovereignty of God *the Spirit, who bloweth when and where he liſteth.*

No. LXXXVIII.

PARDON of ſin is one thing; knowledge of pardon another. The ſoul that under a ſenſe of guilt applies itſelf to the Redeemer for mercy is ſurely already pardoned. Such an one is reconciled to God by virtue of the everlaſting covenant. This pardon and reconciliation though eternal and immutable by that covenant, was ratified when Jeſus hung on the croſs, and it is paſſed over to the ſinner in his ſins, and *in his blood*, whilſt he is an *enemy* and *ungodly*, *rebellious* and *without ſtrength*, conſequently whilſt he is an unbeliever; but the knowledge of this is often for a long

while

while with-holden from the ſoul, yea there may be thoſe *who all their lifetime are ſubject to bondage*, and yet ſhall get ſafe home at laſt. Though the covenant be *ordered in all things and ſure*, yea as ſure as the immutable oath and promiſe of God can make it, *to all the elect ſeed* of grace, yet in order that God's ſaints may know the value of it, they are all made to feel *the plague of their own hearts*, and the bitterneſs of ſin: they are therefore made *weary and heavy laden* by the *ſpirit of bondage to fear*, before they receive the *ſpirit of adoption*, manifeſting to them the relationſhip in which they ſtand as reconciled ſinners, and enabling them to cry *Abba Father*.

The Law as a miniſtration of condemnation, muſt do its office on the ſoul before it will welcome the goſpel as glad tidings, and cloſe with it as a covenant of free grace and peace, and therefore the prince of peace bears this record of himſelf. *The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor, he hath ſent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed.*

No. LXXXIX.

SOULS under ſaving awakenings and convictions of ſin have no idea how much legality, ſelf-righteouſneſs and cleaving to the law of works is in them; nay, though they will acknowledge ſalvation to be by faith only in Chriſt and though they attend clear goſpel preaching, yet they are apt to reaſon thus with themſelves; "Oh that I "had not gone ſuch lengths in ſin! Oh that I "had but taken up ſooner! Oh if I had not re-"belled ſo much againſt light and conſcience and "ſolemn reſolutions to the contrary! If my "tranſgreſſions were not of ſuch and ſuch a na-"ture, I could then venture to believe in Chriſt "for pardon and ſalvation; but now I fear he "will caſt me out if I come unto him." According to all this reaſoning Moſes not Chriſt has the pre-eminence, and in truth it all comes to this iſſue, "God will be favorable to me or not in proportion as I have kept or broken the law." But though Phariſees ſhould rage and formaliſts ſhould ſtorm at the bleſſed truth, yet it is the glorious declaration of the goſpel, that the man who has gone as far as ſin can go to his damnation, has not gone ſo far as Chriſt can go, or rather *has gone*, for his ſalva-

ſalvation: [ſee Rom. v. throughout.] And though one ſingle offence and that only in thought will ſhut up the ſoul under condemnation without the blood of Chriſt, yet whoſoever flies as a periſhing ſinner to that precious *fountain opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs, though his ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as wool; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be white as ſnow.*

It is certain that no man can ever view ſin in too deteſtable a light; but if he views it in ſuch a manner as to eclipſe his views of Chriſt, he cannot feel any kindly ingenuous ſorrow on account of it. Sin viewed in the law begets terror and hardneſs. Viewed in the goſpel it begets ſweet relentings of ſoul.

No. XC.

EVERY believer is ſanctified in a two-fold ſenſe.

1*ſt*. In himſelf, by the mortification of ſin, and by the renewal of his ſoul in holineſs, after the image of God. This ſanctification is often ſadly diſturbed by ſin, and is at beſt always imperfect.

2*dly*. He is completely ſanctified by his myſtical union with Chriſt, his glorious head, and as a mem-

a member of his body; in whom his old man is crucified and dead, and thus as part of Chriſt, whatever Chriſt is, he is.—The more the believer ſees this, the more he longs for deliverance from all ſin in himſelf, aſhamed and humbled that he ſhould be ſo very unlike, not only to his head, but to what he himſelf is in his head.

No. XCI.

A POOR child of God may for a time (there is no ſaying how long) be holden down by the tyranny of ſome accurſed beſetting luſt, whilſt the inmoſt language of his ſoul is, *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me, &c.* (very different from thoſe who offend of *malicious wickedneſs.*) The ſtreams of grace are all the while ſtriving to clear the way, though running through a muddy, dirty channel; and at the very ſeaſons, perhaps, when ſin ſhall have prevailed the moſt ſadly, and the poor creature ſhall be ſaying, "Surely where there is ſo much ſin there can be no grace;" the Lord Jeſus comes in with a taſte of pardoning love, and melts down the heart into filial contrition, ſaying as it were, "Ungrateful ſoul, I am ſtill thy ſalvation; thy

"ſinfullneſs

" ſinfullneſs can make no difference in my love;
" filthy and polluted as thou art in thyſelf, in me
" thou haſt no ſin at all; thy debts are all paid
" and cancelled, and nothing can be laid to thy
" charge. The ſting of death was taken out by me,
" when I purchaſed thee with my own precious
" blood; and none (neither law, ſin, death, hell,
" or the grave) have any demands upon thee,
" but what I have fully anſwered."

" O, replies the poor ſoul, but I muſt not yet
" venture to lay hold on Chriſt by faith, I muſt get
" the victory over my ſin; I muſt repent and hum-
" ble myſelf; yea, and bring forth fruits meet
" for repentance, before I may conclude that I
" am intereſted in Chriſt, that God loves me,
" and that I am fit to die."

Such legal workings are ſad enemies to peace, and tend to ſilence the voice of truth itſelf, yet they are what the moſt gracious ſouls are well acquainted with. Let us ſift them a little, and we ſhall ſoon ſee that they ſtrongly militate againſt the ſcripture method of ſalvation.

The grand miſtake in theſe reaſonings is, that they would thruſt in ſomething between ſin and Chriſt, and find out ſome other remedy for a tranſgreſſion of the law, beſides the goſpel.

It is a truth clear as the ſun, that no ſoul ſhall be ſaved without repentance; but then the nature of repentance is grievouſly miſtaken. Real

repentance

repentance evidences a ſtate of pardon and grace in a ſoul reconciled to God, and taken into covenant with him as an ungodly ſinner; and thus being a ſtate, and not conſiſting in any particular acts of humiliation (though ſuch acts will always evidence ſuch a ſtate) it remains the ſame under all circumſtances, as much as the grace and love of God which cauſed it, remain the ſame.

The firſt fruit of election, and union with Chriſt, is conviction of ſin by the ſpirit; the ſecond fruit, faith, by the ſame ſpirit; (though a degree of faith perhaps juſt ſufficient to keep the ſoul from quite ſinking, always accompanies conviction, in which ſenſe they may be ſaid to go together); the third, holineſs, by the ſame ſpirit. All theſe worketh one and the ſame ſpirit; and they all, with every other privilege and bleſſing of the new covenant are included in the general expreſſion of REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

Repentance, then, any more than its concomitant grace, faith, is not one day in the ſoul, and another day out of it; according as corruptions are more or leſs ſubdued, or according as ſorrow for ſin is more or leſs lively, but being a fruit of union with Chriſt, and of faith in him, as well as being of the very eſſence of converſion and regeneration, its habits remain ever the ſame

in a child of God, however its actings may vary and be obſcured; ſo that there is not a moment in which a believer is not a penitent, and *vice verſâ* in which a penitent is not a believer: neither is there a moment in which the root and principle of ſanctification is not alive in him, though the bloſſoms may ſeem to wither, or the fruit be blown off by ſome nipping wind of temptation.

Though theſe are moſt comfortable truths, which cannot be given up, without giving up the ground of goſpel hope, yet are they far from giving encouragement to carnal ſecurity, or to a licentious walk. A true penitent, from the very nature of the grace that is in him, muſt feel himſelf a miſerable creature under the prevalence of ſin and corruption; his cry will be that of the Pſalmiſt "*my miſdeeds prevail againſt me.*" "O "wretched man that I am! when I would do "good, evil is preſent with me: I hate the ſin "which I commit, and I hate myſelf becauſe of "it. I approve of the law which would reſtrain "me, and I conſent unto its holineſs, as well as to "the juſt right it has over me, but alas the torrent "of corruption bears down all my efforts and re-"ſolutions, and I am led captive by the law of "ſin which is in my members."

In this condition the believer's aſſurance will be

be clouded. The fear of death will haunt him. He will be ready to conclude that he is deceiving his own ſoul: and that all his paſt experience was a deluſion. He will pray and ſtrive, and ſtrive and pray for victory, and in God's due time he ſhall be ſure to have it. He will plead ſcripture promiſes, and will ſearch for ſcripture examples of ſaints in his own condition. Thus though the current of grace may appear to the poor ſoul itſelf to be clogged and ſtopped by the rubbiſh of corruption, and ſin may have broken down all the dams of vows, reſolutions and endeavours: yet all this while grace continues to flow, and that moſt freely too, by taking another channel, inſtructing the ſoul in deep ſelf-knowledge and humility, and thereby defeating and over-ruling the malice of Satan in tempting him to ſin.

XCII.

THE man who ſtrives and fights againſt ſin, though ſin may often be ſuffered to overmatch him, is more aſſuredly a child of God, than he who never felt the plague of his own heart, or who thinks he has no ſin to ſtrive and fight againſt.

No. XCIII.

IT is a great proof of divine faith to believe God's aſſertions in ſpight of inward darkneſs; in ſpight of ſtrong corruptions; in ſpight of Satan's temptations; and in ſpight of the world's lies.

No. XCIV.

WHAT reaſon can be given, but that of God's ſovereignty in election, why the moſt abandoned ſinners of mankind are often called to the knowledge of the goſpel, and made partakers of precious faith in the Son of God, whilſt multitudes of the decent and moral are left to periſh in their own deceivings, as dead to all ſpiritual concerns as the very ſtones they tread upon?

Again, What other reaſon can be given, why of two people in the ſame pew, and hearing the ſame ſermon, the one ſhall be ſavingly wrought upon, and the other perhaps go away contradicting and blaſpheming?

3*dly*. For what other reaſon were the apoſtles *forbidden of the Holy Ghoſt to preach the word in*

in Aſia; and when *they eſſayed to go to Bithynia*, were not ſuffered by the Spirit to accompliſh their purpoſe; whilſt a viſion appeared to Paul in the night, ſaying, *come over unto Macedonia and help us?* Were there not ſouls in *Aſia* and *Bithynia*, as well as in *Macedonia?* Undoubtedly there were. But the miniſters of the goſpel are ſent forth to labor there, and there only, where the lord of the harveſt has work for them to do in calling in his own people.

Oh! the depths both of the wiſdom and mercy of God! How unſearchable are his ways, and his judgments paſt finding out!

No. XCV.

WERE I to receive ſome great gueſt into my houſe, particularly one from whoſe company I hoped to gain much happineſs, much benefit, and much comfort, I ſhould be careful to make my habitation as clean as poſſible, and to do nothing which might grieve, or offer inſult to my welcome and profitable inmate.

But is this my conduct with regard to the bleſſed ſpirit of God? As a believer, *my body is the temple of the Holy Ghoſt which is in me.* Am I then careful not to defile that temple? not to in-

fult and grieve the glorious inhabitant by ſin, nor to quench the holy flame by a careleſs, negligent walk? Thou knoweſt, my ſoul, that the heavenly dove will take its flight from the manſions of impurity, and will not make its abode amōng the thorns of carking worldly cares. Oh! then walk humbly, warily, watchfully; keep thy conſcience tender and void of offence; leſt thou provoke the divine paraclete to withdraw himſelf, and leſt thou loſe the ſenſible preſence of him whoſe favour is better than life.

No. XCVI.

IF we might form a judgment from the conduct of ſome high profeſſors, we ſhould be led to ſuppoſe that faſting, prayers, and alms-deeds of which ſuch great things are ſpoken in ſcripture (not as meritorious, but as concomitants of the juſtified ſoul) are only fit trumpery for legaliſts and papiſts.

Again, If to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourſelves unſpotted from the world, be (as ſaith St. James) the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of pure and undefiled religion, we may well aſk, where then is this genuine primitive Chriſtianity to be found?

No. XCVII.

WHY does a believer ſo often find a wearineſs in God's ſervice, and ſo much deadneſs and indiſpoſition of heart in holy ordinances? The reaſon is, that man's nature and God's law are ever at variance. The fault is not in the law. God forbid. But through the weakneſs and ſinfulneſs of the fleſh, that becomes a burden, which is the believer's duty and privilege.

Still the believer's ſtate in Chriſt is the ſame; and the obedience which he wants in himſelf is ever complete in his glorious head and ſurety. He will however pray and ſtrive againſt this indiſpoſedneſs of heart; and will be deeply humbled under his manifold ſhort-comings; even whilſt he takes Chriſt as his all and in all.

No. XCVIII.

HOW little is the ſin of *ſelfiſhneſs* attended to, though it includes in it the breach of the whole ſecond table at once.

No. XCIX.

THERE are but two ſights which the Spirit ſhews to all the elect, as neceſſary to ſalvation; theſe are,

1*ſt*. The evil of ſin.

2*dly*. The glory of Chriſt.

No. C.

THEY who place conviction of ſin before pardon of ſin, muſt thereby invert the order of the goſpel, and place ſanctification (in a meaſure) before juſtification. For it cannot be ſuppoſed that the Spirit dwells in my heart as a reprover or convincer of ſin, and does not at the ſame time act as a ſanctifier. Yet the common error teaches that I may be at the ſame moment convinced of ſin, praying and ſtriving againſt it, and yet unpardoned and under the law's curſe.

But if conviction of ſin is to precede the pardon of it, I ſhould be glad to know how long the ſoul is to be under theſe convictions before it may expect pardon.

2*dly*.

2*dly*. What degree of conviction is neceſſary to prepare or qualify the ſoul for pardon.

3*dly*. If the convinced perſon ſhould die before pardon, what would become of him in another world.

4*thly*. If conviction be previous to pardon, how comes it to paſs that the apoſtles always addreſs their new converts, as having received the atonement, as being reconciled when they were enemies, as thoſe to whom God has already forgiven all treſpaſſes. If not before, at leaſt when they were firſt quickened? Ep. ii. 4. 5. 32. Col. i. 14. 21. Col. ii. 13. Col. iii. 13.

5*thly*. Is the convinced ſinner at enmity with God? if he be not at enmity with him, he muſt be juſtified, ſince there is no middle ſtate between wrath and pardon. If it be ſaid that he is at enmity with God, then how can the ſpirit of grace be in him, and how can that ſpirit have ſhewn him the evil of ſin, and how can he be longing after Chriſt and the bleſſings of ſalvation, which every convinced ſinner moſt certainly does?

All theſe queſtions muſt neceſſarily ariſe, (and ſolve them who can) from that popular miſtake, ſo baneful to the ſoul's comfort, and ſo clogging to the wheels of filial obedience, of placing conviction of ſin or repentance before reconciliation, thereby making theſe to be ſomething which we bring to Chriſt,

Chriſt, inſtead of bleſſings we receive out of his fulneſs. And here I muſt obſerve, that this miſtake itſelf ariſes from confounding pardon with the knowledge and ſenſe of it, which it is the office of faith to draw from Chriſt, in whom the coming, weary, bruiſed ſinner has already redemption and forgiveneſs, as much as the moſt advanced believer, though both at his firſt coming, as well as all his life afterwards, he ſtands in need of freſh application of atoning blood to the conſcience; and freſh actings of repentance, on account of his continual tranſgreſſions of God's holy law, which the moſt exalted ſaint never keeps *perfectly* for a ſingle moment.

No. CI.

FAITH and repentance can in no ſound ſenſe be called conditions of the new covenant; but they are thoſe gifts and graces which the Lord works by his ſpirit in all thoſe whom he has already taken into covenant with himſelf.

The very firſt motion of the ſoul towards God is the effect of his having loved, choſen and reconciled that ſoul unto himſelf in Chriſt Jeſus. Even the day of the ſoul's eſpouſals is when ſhe is dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; and all her wedding ornaments are what ſhe receives from her huſband

huſband after marriage; ſeeing ſhe brings nothing to him but rags, yea, *filthy rags*, which cannot cover her nakedneſs.

All the ſoul's after-advancements in the divine life, are but ſteps whereby ſhe riſes up to the knowledge of thoſe bleſſings which are treaſured up for her in Chriſt, and which ſhe receives out of his inexhauſtible fullneſs. The firſt of theſe bleſſings, which the awakened, convinced ſoul is moſt particularly deſirous of obtaining, is a ſenſe of the forgiveneſs of ſin. The life-giving Spirit having made the ſoul feel the burden of ſin, ſhe becomes weary and heavy laden; and through the weakneſs of her faith, not ſeeing her intereſt in Chriſt, ſhe is ready to ſink under the mighty load, and cannot be ſatisfied till the ſame Spirit proclaim and witneſs peace within her, and enable her to cry *Abba Father*, as the *earneſt*, *ſeal* and *pledge* of her ſalvation. Various ſtill are the ſoul's wants. She complains of her weakneſs, her ignorance, her deadneſs, her averſion to duty, her broken vows and reſolutions, her ſtrong corruptions, her manifold temptations, her ſad deſertions, worldly perſecutions, &c. &c. Under all theſe, however, the Lord ſuſtains her and brings her ſafe through every trial, till at laſt, in ſpight of all the efforts of ſin, Satan and hell, he brings her where ſorrow and ſighing flee away; where the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and where the weary are at reſt.

No. CII.

No. CII.

THE moſt advanced ſaint knows not the thouſandth part of the depths of ſin that are in himſelf, nor the thouſandth part of the depths of that love that are in Chriſt.

No. CIII.

OUR not feeling ſin is no proof that we have it not. The non-ſenſation of ſin muſt be from ſpiritual death; the quick ſenſation thereof from ſpiritual life.

No. CIV.

THE ſelf-ſufficiency, ſelf-righteouſneſs and pride of the Phariſee, eſpecially of a Phariſee under a Chriſtian name, though he may be free from external offences, are more deteſtable in the eyes of God, and have more of the nature of Satan in them, (for that fiend cannot commit bodily ſins, ſuch as gluttony, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, &c.) than any outward abominations whatever.

No. CV.

THE man who goes about to humble himſelf and to amend after a fall into ſin, before he looks to Chriſt, only gets hardneſs into his heart, and attempts to purge away ſin by ſin.

Nothing muſt ſtand between the ſinner and the Savior. It is the believer's privilege and duty at all times to behold the Lamb of God, as having put away his ſin; and thus looking to him the heart will be melted into ſweet contrition.

Sin is the tranſgreſſion of the law; and whoſoever attempts to amend his life or to repent of his ſins before he will claim his intereſt in Chriſt, not only perverts the deſign of the goſpel, which holds forth Chriſt to ſinners, merely as ſinners, but tries to piece the law which he has broken, by giving it another rent; the law however curſes the attempt to patch it up, as much as the firſt breach of it. If then you would have peace in your conſcience, and holineſs in your life, look to Jeſus as having redeemed you from the curſe of the law; and then you will obey the law from a principle of love and gratitude; yea, you will delight in it after the inner man; but it is impoſſible you can love that which is always laſhing you, and which you fear in the end will damn you for your tranſgreſſions againſt it.

No. CVI.

EITHER take Chriſt or Moſes for your huſband; for you cannot have both. If you are married to Chriſt, you are divorced from the law; (that is as a covenant by which you are to be ſaved, but not as a rule of life): but if you are wedded to Moſes, you have no part in Chriſt; and you will find Moſes to be as bloody an huſband as Zipporah did of old.

No. CVII.

A CHILD of God may perhaps be involved and entangled in ſuch a manner, by ſome particular temptation, as to be almoſt at his wit's end. He may try to get away from it, but circumſtances may be ſo ordered that he cannot. He may ſtrive and pray againſt it, and yet may be permitted to be overcome by it. He may reſolve and fall, and fall and reſolve; and ſtill may ſeem to be no nearer deliverance. Nay, he may ſeem for a ſeaſon to have obtained deliverance; and yet Satan may foil him worſe than ever. (Oh! the diſtreſs of a poor ſoul in ſuch

ſuch depths.) He concludes himſelf caſt out of God's remembrance. Cruel and raſh profeſſors, unacquainted with Satan's temptations, and ignorant of the power of ſin in themſelves, put him down as having no grace; but the Lord all the while ſuſtains him, and ſeals inſtruction upon his heart; teaching him many humbling leſſons, diſcovering to him his own weakneſs, ſhewing him where all his ſtrength lies, and framing his ſpirit to bear with his brethren in like circumſtances, and never to open the Phariſaic lip of pride and uncharitableneſs againſt them.

When theſe and any other uſeful ends, for which the temptation is ſuffered to remain, are anſwered, the Lord will mercifully remove it; and the ſoul ſhall know and taſte more than ever it did before of the ſweetneſs and extent of that gracious promiſe, *all things ſhall work together for good to thoſe who love God, to thoſe who are the called after his purpoſe.*

No. CVIII.

A STATE of ſpiritual life is not always to be known by a freedom from ſin, nor by any external works of righteouſneſs. Neither ought we to pronounce any man to be in a ſtate of ſpiri-

tual death, becauſe he may have fallen into ſin; ſeeing that this would be to condemn many of the moſt eminent ſcripture ſaints.

No. CIX.

GRACE and nature both act in a regenerate man; and both at once. Nature only acts in an unregenerate man. So that though ſin be directly contrary to the Chriſtian's walk, and as regenerate he hates it, and cannot commit it; yet the old nature in a believer can never love holineſs, but is at perpetual enmity with it, and can only be reconciled to ſin. Hence that continual, never-ceaſing war, in a child of God, between fleſh and ſpirit, ſin and grace, the law in the members and the law in the mind.

No. CX.

THE man who is not watchful in his life and converſation, and who is not humble in his heart and deportment, as much deſpiſes Chriſt in his kingly office, as the ſelf-righteous Phariſee deſpiſes him in his prieſtly office; or as he that is wiſe in his own conceit, ſlights him in his prophetical office.

No. CXI.

No. CXI.

OF all the abſurd cavils that ever were raiſed againſt the doctrines of grace, the moſt ſo is that of their being inimical to holineſs and to good works.

Surely the boaſted ſons of reaſon muſt here have grievouſly deſerted their own ſtandard, and have fled for refuge to arguments which even a child might juſtly be aſhamed of. Let us however give them their full force, and a patient hearing.

"If man (ſay they) be taken into covenant with God as a guilty helpleſs ſinner, if (as ſome *enthuſiaſts* affirm) he hath redemption through the blood of Chriſt, even the forgiveneſs of his ſins, according to the riches of God's grace, without any merit or works of his own previous to his acceptance, or as conditions thereof; the conſequence muſt needs be, that having his heavy debt of ſin freely remitted *without money and without price*, the ſenſe of ſo much mercy and love will neceſſarily cauſe him to diſobey the commands of his heavenly Father, who hath done ſuch great things for him, and inſtead of abounding in good works, he will delight only in the practice of all manner of iniquity."

It may be ſaid that I have dreſſed up the objection in a fool's coat in order to laugh at it. But

in very deed it can wear no other, for turn the argument, and view it which way you will, it ſtill comes round to this, viz. "The doctrine of "ſalvation by grace is unfriendly to morality and "to good works, it teaches men to live after their "own hearts luſts, and to wallow in ungodlineſs."

Thus cries many a grave, learned, dignified ſcribe, pleading for morality [which he perhaps cares little about] and being an advocate for good works [which 'tis more than probable he never practiſes.]

Let us now hear St. Paul's judgment of this matter; and let one text ſuffice, inſtead of a multitude which might be brought.

The grace of God which bringeth ſalvation, teacheth us that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world. See now theſe two opinions in contraſt.

Faſhionable Divinity.	*St. Paul.*
THE doctrine of ſalvation by grace is unfriendly to morality and to good works. It teaches men to live after their own hearts luſts, and to wallow in ungodlineſs.	THE grace of God which bringeth ſalvation, teaches us that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent world.

But

But behold, a greater than Paul is here!

Our bleſſed Lord when he propounded the parable of the creditor and the two debtors (who were both *frankly forgiven*) to Simon the Phariſee, concluded the converſation with ſaying that *to whom much is forgiven, the ſame loveth much; but, to whom little is forgiven, the ſame loveth little.*

From ſcripture let us proceed to matter of fact both among clergy and laity.

Where is licentiouſneſs curbed? where is pure practical religion to be found? In the pulpits and congregations where works are inſiſted on as meritorious or conditional to juſtification? Or where we are told that *by grace we are ſaved through faith, and that not of ourſelves, it is the gift of God; not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt; for we are his workmanſhip created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we ſhould walk in them.*

Alas! Is it not evident that multitudes of moral ſermons produce nothing but multitudes of immoral actions! But where the glad tidings of ſalvation by grace, through faith alone in Chriſt Jeſus are ſounded, there the effects of that grace, and the fruits of that faith are to be ſeen in ſinners hearts being changed, and their lives and

conver-

converſations being regulated according to God's holy word.

Let one ſtriking example conclude our preſent meditation.

When that faithful miniſter of Chriſt, Mr. V——n, was vicar of H——d in Yorkſhire, he told me that a neighbouring clergyman, the Rev. Doctor L——, then vicar of H——x, one day addreſſed him nearly in the following words: "Mr. V——n, I don't know how it is, but I "ſhould really think that your doctrines of grace "and faith were calculated to make all your "hearers live in ſin; and yet I muſt own that "there is an aſtoniſhing reformation wrought in "your pariſh; whereas I don't believe I ever "made one ſoul the better, though I have been "telling them their duty ſo many years."

Mr. V——n ſmiled at the Doctor's ingenuous confeſſion, and frankly told him, "he would do well to burn all his old ſermons, and try what preaching Chriſt would do." But it is to be feared the advice was never followed.

I only add, that if all the *(merely)* moral ſermons in the kingdom were to undergo the ſame operation, though it would perhaps be the greateſt, it would be one of the moſt pleaſing bonfires to God that ever was kindled.

No. CXII.

No. CXII.

THERE can be no rule of right and wrong but the will of God; this will is contained in the law of God, which is the written tranſcript of his mind, and is revealed to man in the ten commandments. Every believer in Chriſt acknowledges that he is dead to this law, and that this law is dead to him, as a covenant of works by which he is to hope for juſtification and ſalvation. But it is amazing that any believers ſhould deny that the moral law remains in full force, as a rule of life to every one that is ingrafted into Chriſt by faith: and yet when they come to explain themſelves, it ſhall be found, that this manner of ſpeaking is by no means deſigned to caſt diſhonor on the law, or to ſet aſide any of its commands.

Their language is, that b ing the freemen of Chriſt, they are no longer under the bondage of the law; and that the love of God is the grand principle and ſpring of all holy obedience.

It is agreed on all hands, that every believer is as much delivered from the law, as a covenant of works whereby he is to expect life, as a woman who is married a ſecond time is freed from

from obedience to her firſt huſband, who is dead.

It is alſo agreed, that love is the grand motive of all holy obedience.

Wherein now is the difference? One Chriſtian ſays that the law is a believer's rule of life; another ſays the law is not a believer's rule of life. Yet both ſay that they are no longer under the law, as a covenant of works; and both ſay that the love of God is the Chriſtian's grand principle of obedience. Surely the diſpute is merely about words.

To affirm that *the law of love* is my rule, and not the moral law, is not leſs a diſtinction without a difference. For what is the moral law but the law of love? The ſum and ſubſtance of it is love. Love to God, and love to our neighbor. It may be objected, how can that be the law of love which ſhuts up every ſoul under wrath, and is itſelf a miniſtration of wrath, death, and condemnation? It may as reaſonably be aſked, how can God be *love*, and yet a *conſuming fire?* He is nevertheleſs both. And as He is, ſo is his law. It levels all the curſes, thunderings and firings of Sinai, againſt every ſoul that is under it. But it is a law of love to the believer in Chriſt; his language (whether under the Old Teſtament or under the New) is, *O how I love thy law! I delight*

delight in the law after the inward man. With the mind, I ſerve the law of God, pointing particularly to that law which ſaith, *Thou ſhalt not covet. This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.*

Again, to make a diſtinction between *the royal law of love*, and the moral law, is to jump into the very error it tries to avoid; for it tends to the eſtabliſhment of that Arminian whim, called *a remedial law of grace*, and cauſes the eternal immutable law of Jehovah, to ſtoop to the frailty of the creature.

Can any thing be plainer than the following texts to prove that the moral law and the law of love are one and the ſame?

Our Savior ſaith, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind, and ſoul and ſtrength. This is the firſt and great commandment. And the ſecond is like unto it*, viz. *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbor as thyſelf. On theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* Thus ſpake he who came to reſcue the moral law from the falſe gloſſes which the Scribes and Phariſees had put upon it, and to enforce it in its extent and ſpirituality, both for conviction of ſin, and as a rule of life.

Let us hear now the language of his apoſtles. *Owe no man any thing, but to love one another*; *for*

for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law. For this, thou ſhalt not commit adultery; thou ſhalt not kill; thou ſhalt not ſteal; thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs; thou ſhalt not covet: and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, *thou ſhalt love thy neighbor as thyſelf. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10. Hear now another witneſs. *If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the ſcripture, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf, ye do well. For he that ſaid thou ſhalt not commit adultery, ſaid alſo do not kill,* &c. &c. Jam. ii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Where now is the difference between the moral law and the law of love? and how can one be a believer's rule of life without the other, ſince in reality they are one and the ſame?

If it be ſaid, that a believer takes the whole book of God to be his rule of life; and not the twentieth chapter of Exodus only;

I anſwer, that by taking the law to be my rule of life, I by no means reject, but on the contrary I adopt every other part of the ſacred volume, (thoſe ſhadows and ceremonies, which are paſſed away, excepted) as nothing is enjoined or forbidden therein which is not comprehended in the decalogue. Perfect love to God is the rule of

of the firſt table. Love to our neighbor as to ourſelves, the rule of the ſecond table.

Let it now be conſidered, that this moral law, or *law of love*, or *law of liberty* to man in innocence, and to man redeemed, (being a law of wrath and terror only to man fallen) is that very ſame law which was written on Adam's heart in Paradiſe: the ſame which continued from Adam unto Moſes, when it was more diſtinctly promulgated from Mount Sinai: the ſame which accuſed or excuſed the conſciences of the Gentiles: the ſame which brings in the whole world guilty before its precepts: the ſame which our Lord in his firſt ſermon on the Mount, enforces and reſtores to its purity: the ſame which the apoſtles hold forth as the ſteady rule by which believers, under the influence of faith and love, are to walk.

Let theſe things be duly conſidered; and then let us briefly examine what miſchiefs will ariſe from rejecting the moral law as a believer's rule of life.

1ſt. By ſo doing, I ſet aſide the immutable eternal nature of the law, and *make void* the everlaſting obligation there is upon all reaſonable creatures to obey it.

2dly. Take away the law (as the ſtandard of good and evil, by which all actions are to be

 tried),

tried), and with it we take away ſin alſo; *for where no law is, there is no tranſgreſſion.*

3*dly.* Take away the law, as the teſt and criterion of right and wrong, and no believer on earth can tell when he offends God; for *I had not known ſin,* (ſaith St. Paul) except the law had ſaid *thou ſhalt not covet.*

4*thly.* Take away the law, as a believer's rule of life, and he ceaſes to ſee the continual need he ſtands in of Chriſt, to ſave him from his daily and hourly tranſgreſſions againſt it.

5*thly.* Take away the law, as that by which a believer is to ſquare his conduct; and what other rule will you eſtabliſh in its ſtead? Does faith in Chriſt teach us any other obedience than what is briefly comprehended in theſe words, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,* &c. *and thy neighbor as thyſelf.*

Now, Chriſtian, let me aſk thee, Is not the law thy rule of life? thou wilt anſwer, Yes, through grace I take the law as ſuch; but alas! I fall ſadly ſhort in my obedience to it. Be humbled then for thy tranſgreſſions, and rejoice in this; *viz. that Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth; for what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the fleſh, God ſending his own Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, and for ſin condemned ſin in the fleſh, that the*

the righteouſneſs of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit.

Let us conclude this number by lamenting that any worthy laborious miniſters ſhould get themſelves branded with the name of Antinomians, and greatly hurt their own uſefulneſs, by denying the law to be a believer's rule of life, whilſt in reality they are zealous for good works, and ſtrenuous advocates for vital godlineſs, as well as crucified to the world, and exemplary in their own lives and converſations.

No. CXIII.

THOUGH the ſins and backſliding of a believer cannot deſtroy his intereſt in Chriſt, yet they may ſo far deſtroy his comfort (eſpecially, if long perſiſted in againſt light and love, and of a foul nature), that even after he is delivered from the power of them, he may for a long time go bleeding under the wounds he has received from the commiſſion of them.

The promiſe indeed is ſure that God will not UTTERLY *take away his loving kindneſs* from one individual of the ſeed of grace, yet the threat is no leſs certain, that *he will viſit their iniquity with a rod, and their ſin with ſcourges*, not in a way of

vindictive wrath, for that was all ſpent upon Chriſt, but in a way of mercy and fatherly chaſtiſement. And, they only who know what it is to loſe the light of God's countenance after having enjoyed it for any time, can tell how ſad and bitter a thing it is to be without the ſenſible preſence of him whoſe favor is better than life.

In ſuch a ſtate, however, it is a good ſign when the ſoul is very earneſt and importunate at the throne of grace to recover its former frames and feelings, and a very bad ſign when ſenſible conſolations are looked upon as nothing worth.

The language of grace in theſe ſtraits will be "O Lord, let me regain, yea more than regain my "firſt love, and do my firſt works. O let me "be zealous and repent; and remember from "whence I am fallen. O let thy love be again "ſhed abroad in my poor diſconſolate barren "heart by the Holy Ghoſt. Do thou enable "me to cry *Abba Father*; and let thy ſpirit bear "witneſs with my ſpirit that I am a child of "God." If ſuch be the cry of thy heart, thy prayer will be heard, and anſwered, only wait patiently the Lord's leiſure.

No. CXIV.

HE was delivered for our offences, and raiſed again for our juſtification.

The juſtification here mentioned is certainly not of our perſons before God; becauſe this was effected by a work of Chriſt, previous to his reſurrection, viz. by his obedience unto death; including his active and paſſive righteouſneſs. But the juſtification in this place means a declarative acquittal before angels and men; in the ſame ſenſe as good works juſtify our faith and profeſſion: Jam. ii. 24. or as good words juſtify the ſoundneſs and integrity of the heart. *By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified.* Mat. xii. 27. Or as *wiſdom is juſtified of her children.* Luke, vii. 35. In this view of the text, it is animating, and full of conſolation.

No. CXV.

AN healthy man may fall down and break a bone, (eſpecially if he venture upon ſlippery places), which yet may be ſet again, and the

limb be ſtronger than before, without impairing his conſtitution. But there is leſs hope of him who is in a ſpiritual decline, or in an atrophy.

As it is in temporals, ſo in ſpirituals: a ſtrong Chriſtian, by venturing too much on the ſlippery borders of temptation, may get a fearful tumble into the mire, and complain of broken bones as David did; but by grace he will riſe again, and walk more warily: whereas ſpiritual declenſions (at the root of which the canker worm of worldly-mindedneſs uſually lies concealed) eat up the very vitals of religion; and are the more dangerous as they advance more imperceptibly.

No. CXVI.

THE moſt advanced Chriſtians little ſuſpect how much ſelf-confidence and cleaving to the law of works ſtill remains in them. When they would ſoar heavenwards, and enjoy communion and fellowſhip with their Lord, they find that the wings of faith and love are clipped; they have no liberty in their conſciences, no acceſs with boldneſs to the throne of grace: *They feel not the love of God ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt*; obedience of courſe flags, duty is irkſome, and they cry *my leanneſs, my leanneſs*. Alas! my ſoul,

ſoul, what doſt thou loſe by not living more by the faith of the Son of God? Examine thyſelf well, and thou wilt find that all thy dry barren frames and all thy unfruitfulneſs is owing to thy looking too much at ſelf, and not enough to Chriſt. Pray then for an increaſe of the *precious faith of God's elect*. Lean leſs, rather not at all, on thyſelf, more on Chriſt. Then ſhalt thou ſoon find that *his ſtrength ſhall be made perfect in thy weakneſs*; yea, that though *of thyſelf thou can'ſt do nothing*, yet that *thou can'ſt do all things through Chriſt who ſtrengtheneth thee:* then ſhalt thou run with an enlarged heart the way of God's commandments; thy language ſhall be, Oh! how I love thy law: mortification, ſelf-denial, and taking up the croſs, though impoſſible to fleſh and blood, ſhall even be delightful to thee: nay, thou ſhalt not only be *ready to ſuffer, but, if need be, to die for the Lord Jeſus.*

Thus ſhall the ſenſe of thy own weakneſs, ſinfulneſs and nothingneſs bring glory to God and profit to thyſelf.

No. CXVII.

No. CXVII.

THERE are thoſe who think they ought never to pray but when they find their hearts drawn out by the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication, inviting them as it were to that holy exerciſe.

This notion appears to have no foundation in ſcripture; yea, it ſeems directly contrary to ſcripture, and if given way to, may in the end leave the ſoul totally prayerleſs, if not graceleſs.

I would rather follow the example of Luther, who always haſtened to the throne of grace, when he found the greateſt indiſpoſition to go thither; and by that means often warmed a cold heart at the fire of God's altar.

Under the law if the ſacrifice would not go willingly, it was to be dragged. And under the goſpel, *the kingdom of heaven ſuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

No. CXVIII.

I HAVE often been aſtoniſhed that any good men ſhould be againſt making a general tender of the goſpel to ſinners.

It

It will be ſaid, that none have intereſt in goſpel bleſſings but believers. Granted. But ſtill their right and title to the goſpel is not founded on their being believers; but merely on their being ſinners, deſtitute of every ſpark of faith, grace, or goodneſs.

But if the goſpel is to be preached only to believers, or to a gathered church, to whom did the apoſtles preach it before any ſouls were converted to the faith? certainly not to believers, none of which were perhaps before them in the multitudes they addreſſed, but *to ſinners* as ſuch, who by believing the goſpel report become intereſted in the ſalvation it holds forth.

It is trifling to ſay that a general offer ſuppoſes a power in the ſinner to believe and to accept that offer. This is by no means the caſe; but it ſuppoſes that God accompanies his own word with his own power. And that he directs that arrow to the hearts of his own people, which the preacher ſhoots by *drawing the bow at a venture.* The almighty *fiat* originally ſpake the world out of nothing: and ſurely he who gives the command to believe and to ariſe from the dead, can clothe that mandate with a quickening efficacy, ſo that elect ſouls ſhall come out of the grave of unbelief and live.——"Thus (ſaith Bp. Beveridge) "we find in Iſrael's return from Babylon to "Jeruſalem; though Cyrus made proclama-

"tion

" tion that whoever would might go up to wor-
" ſhip at the holy city, Ezra 1. 3. yet there were
" none that accepted the offer *but thoſe whoſe*
" *ſpirit God had raiſed to go up.* v. 5. So here,
" though God doth as it were proclaim to all the
" world, that whoſoever will come to Chriſt ſhall
" certainly be ſaved, yet it is certain none can will
" to come unleſs God enable them."

Bp. Beveridge's Private Thoughts.

Under the law, the prophets made the general offer to ſinners: Ezekiel particularly addreſſed himſelf to the dry bones, *O ye dry bones, hear ye the word of the Lord.* And under the goſpel, our Lord and his apoſtles frequently called to the dead in ſin, *to repent and to believe the goſpel:* nay St. Peter actually excites *Simon Magus*, (though then *in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity*) both to repentance and to prayer.—In a word, they made the general tender to ſinners, *whoſoever will let him come and take of the water of life freely*, though only *as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*

It was the departing command of our bleſſed Lord to his diſciples. *Preach the goſpel to every creature.* In which command, certainly, no one creature is excepted. Much leſs millions and millions of creatures, which would be the caſe, if the offer of Chriſt were to be made only to believers, who are

are already intereſted in him. So that the command ſeems worded in ſuch a manner as expreſſly to take in the unconverted.

Beſides, how could any be left without excuſe at the great day for rejecting the goſpel offer, if that offer never were made to them?

Laſtly. It is a notorious fact that God bleſſes and owns that preaching in which there are ſolemn adreſſes to ſinners; whereas thoſe who only apply themſelves to believers are ſeldom made inſtrumental in adding to their number.

Much has been ſaid againſt a pious miniſter for telling his congregation that "he charged them all to meet him at God's right hand at the great day." The expreſſion is a ſtrong one. yet ſurely all he meant was this. "If you periſh, "your blood be on your own heads, I have now "ſolemnly warned you. I have delivered my "own meſſage, and my own ſoul. If you "neglect this warning, you will die eternally. "If you turn to God in conſequence of it, I "ſhall meet you as my joy and crown of re-"joicing at the right hand of God before an aſ-"ſembled world."

In this ſenſe, and certainly no other was intended, the expreſſion was not only allowable, but ſound, and no objection can reaſonably lie againſt

againſt it, but what will equally lie againſt the prophet Ezekiel for his expoſtulations with the rebellious houſe of Iſrael, *to turn* THEMSELVES *and live.*

No. CXIX.

THE believer carries no worſe enemy about him than *ſpiritual ſloth.* This foe is ſo much the more ſubtle as it does not make its attacks ſuddenly, but creeps upon him unawares; and the more dangerous, as it aſſaults both ſoul and body; and both ſoul and body are too ready to ſide with it againſt themſelves. Other ſins are for the moſt part either fleſhly or ſpiritual. Among the former, are gluttony, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, &c. Among the latter, pride, envy, malice, hatred, &c. but *ſpiritual ſloth* affects both body and mind, and whoſoever gives way to it deprives himſelf of many bleſſings which are promiſed to ſtriving, diligent, circumſpect ſouls.

It may be ſaid that God in the everlaſting covenant has ſet down and decreed what degrees of grace, knowledge, and fruitfulneſs all his people ſhould arrive at; and therefore all their ſtriving

ſtriving and praying will not add a tittle thereto, or diminiſh an atom therefrom.

I anſwer, that though this be a ſcriptural truth, and when rightly taken by a poor ſeeking ſoul complaining of barrenneſs, a very comfortable one, yet the language of the objection is totally unſcriptural, and argues only for the abuſe, not for the uſe of the doctrine; and whoſoever can reſt ſatisfied under the notion that he has as much grace and fruitfulneſs as God before ordained that he ſhould have, has reaſon to ſuſpect that he may be in the number of thoſe whom God has before ordained to condemnation; ſince a regenerate heart cannot exiſt without its diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic, an *hungring and thirſting after righteouſneſs.*

Moſt certain it is, that known unto God are all his works; and that every the moſt minute circumſtance which concerns his church, and every individual member thereof, is exactly and wiſely ordered; inſomuch that as nothing comes by chance, ſo nothing can be altered to be otherwiſe than it is.

But it is equally certain, that ſecret things belong unto God, whoſe decrees are all accompliſhed in the uſe of appointed means; and that a man may as reaſonably expect to become ſober by drinking drams, or to get fat by ſtarving himſelf

to death, as any ſoul may ſuppoſe he can be admitted into heaven without *ſtriving* to enter in at the ſtrait gate.

Thoſe whom the Lord in his counſel *(ſecret to us)* hath predeſtinated unto eternal life, he hath alſo *predeſtinated to be conformed to the image of his own dear Son*, in their way thither; and ſuch as are branches ingrafted into Chriſt the true vine, are *purged by the heavenly huſbandman that they ſhould bring forth much fruit.*

Again, though all goſpel bleſſings are treaſured up in Chriſt, yet they are promiſed to *knocking*, *ſeeking*, *aſking* ſouls, and whoſoever calls himſelf a believer, and has not found in the courſe of his experience, that the way to thrive in his ſoul, is to live near to God, fighting againſt ſin in the ſtrength of Chriſt, and in a diligent uſe of the means of grace, may well call in queſtion the truth of his faith, and doubt whether *the root of the matter*, as Job ſpeaks, was ever really in him.

But it is in vain to waſte words. All the exhortations, commands and threats, with which the ſcripture abounds, are levelled againſt this complicated evil, *ſpiritual ſloth*. O then, my ſoul, take unto thee the whole armour of God; and above all, the ſhield of faith. Up, up, and be doing. Strive earneſtly; fight manfully; redeem the

the time. Death, judgment, eternity are at hand: and who knows what a day may bring forth? Whatever be out of thy ſight, as to the Lord's decrees, his revealed will is before thy eyes; and *this is the will of God, even your ſanctification.*

Inſtead therefore of perplexing thyſelf with vain reaſonings, as to the purpoſes of God concerning thy ſpiritual growth and attainments, behold both *his* deſigns and *thy* duty reconciled, and pointed out by the apoſtle. *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you of his good pleaſure.*

No. CXX.

THOUGH the temptations of God's people are various, according to the reſpective circumſtances and temperament of the parties, yet there are very few, perhaps no real Chriſtians, who have not been diſtreſſed on the three following accounts.

1*ſt*. Great wanderings and great deadneſs in prayer.

2*dly*. Blaſphemous and other horrible thoughts, particularly at the very ſeaſons when they would moſt wiſh to be freed from thoſe thoughts.

3*dly*. Doubts about the truth of the ſcriptures, extending to queſtion even the very being of a God.

Theſe are matters that the vaſſals of Satan ſeldom perplex themſelves about. But if that fiend of darkneſs cannot keep one of Chriſt's ſheep out of heaven, he will make them go limping thither if he can.

No. CXXI.

IT is abſolutely impoſſible that the world ſhould have any idea either of the joys or ſorrows of God's people; becauſe both the one and the other are peculiar to grace; and are ſuch as nature is totally incapable of taking any part in.

No. CXXII.

EVERY believer, who has attained a right knowledge of himſelf, will acknowledge with bleſſed Bradford the martyr, then Dean of St. Paul's, that the ſeeds of every ſin that ever was or can be committed, are in his own heart and nature.

This

This knowledge affords the Chriſtian great cauſe of humility. But it affords him greater ſtill, that the Lord hath loved him in this ſtate of filth, rebellion and apoſtacy; yea hath waſhed him ſo pure in the blood of his ſon, that the moral law itſelf can find no ſpeck of ſin upon him. And that, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, he chooſes God for his portion, and turns his back on the world, the fleſh, and the devil.

No. CXXIII.

WHAT rich food for a believing ſoul is there in this one promiſe, "*Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee?*" Bleſſed be thy name, O Lord, for the full experience that one poor ſinner has repeatedly had of the power and efficacy of this promiſe, even when heart and fleſh were ready to fail; and when his own ſin and baſeneſs had been the cauſe of his diſtreſs; ſo that he could truly adopt the prophet's exclamation: *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thyſelf, but in me is thy help.*

No. CXXIV.

THE man who does not ſee that the world is his enemy, who does not feel his danger from its ſnares and entanglements, and even from its allowable comforts; and who does not watch and pray againſt a worldly mind, is of all others the faſteſt bound with the world's chains.

Lord, evermore give me that faith which overcometh the world; that ſo I may be crucified unto the world, and the world unto me.

No. CXXV.

IT were much to be wiſhed, that the miniſters of the goſpel would not only lift up their voices againſt the outward abominations of drunkenneſs, profaneneſs, ſabbath-breaking, uncleanneſs, &c. but that they would more frequently ſhew their hearers the diabolical nature of ſpiritual wickedneſs; ſuch as pride, envy, malice, hatred, revenge, covetouſneſs, ſelf-will, uncharitableneſs; with many others which ſpring from

from the ſame infernal root, and under the power of which multitudes live and die, without ever being made ſenſible of their accurſed quality and heinous gilt.

But oh! how ſad is it to ſee profeſſors of the religion of the meek and lovely Jeſus, under the influence and dominion of theſe Satanical tempers, even whilſt *the outſide of the platter* is made exceedingly white and clean, and there whilſt is an exact *talkative* knowledge of goſpel doctrines; with a running about to hear different preachers, perhaps three or four times a week; an hymn book, a ticket, and a little Bible, being the uſual pocket furniture. Often alas! have I been witneſs to theſe things. Yet ſure I am that it was the conſtant practice of our Lord and of his apoſtles to bear the ſame teſtimony againſt theſe truly deviliſh diſpoſitions, as againſt adultery, fornication, drunkenneſs, theft and murder. *Out of the heart* (ſaith Chriſt) *proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetouſneſs, deceit, laſciviouſneſs, an evil eye, blaſphemy, pride, fooliſhneſs.* Mark, vii. 21, 22. So the apoſtle Paul, enumerating the works of the fleſh, claſſes *hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, envyings*, with *adulteries, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like.* Gal. v. 21. And in v. 26. he adds, *let us not be deſirous of vain glory,*

glory, provoking one another, envying one another. The Church of England too teaches all her members to pray againſt *pride, vain glory and hypocriſy, envy, hatred and malice,* with the ſame breath that they ſupplicate deliverance from fornication, and all other deadly ſin. And in the exhortation before the communion, ſhe not only ranks malice and envy with blaſphemy and adultery, but warns all perſons who are under the power of theſe ſins, not to approach the Lord's table. However deteſtable in God's pure eyes, corporeal ſins, ſuch as gluttony, drunkenneſs, uncleanneſs, &c. may be, yet ſpiritual iniquities are more of the eſſence of the fallen nature, as well of the nature of Satan himſelf than thoſe are: but both the one and other ſpring from the ſame poiſoned fountain, viz. the original corruption and apoſtacy of man, and therefore they are both equally denominated by *the works of the fleſh*; nay, they are both alike called *filthineſs*, the ſpirit as well as the fleſh having its own groſs pollutions; and the ſame remedy is pointed out in ſcripture for the cure of one as the other, viz. faith in the word of promiſe. *Having therefore, dearly beloved, theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe ourſelves* from all FILTHINESS *of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.* 2 Cor. vii. 1. *wherefore* (ſaith another apoſtle) *laying aſide all malice*

malice and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envyings, &c. as new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the word. 1 Pet. xxi. 2. Now, in all this black catalogue there is not a ſin named but what the ſpiritual, or I ſhould rather ſay, the immaterial part of man commits, and not one that his material part, the body, can have any ſhare in; and yet the exhortation againſt them is not at all leſs ſtrong than againſt the outward abominations ſpecified in the eleventh verſe of that ſame chapter. *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly luſts, which war againſt the ſoul.* St. Paul again mentions theſe ſpiritual filthineſſes as what highly grieve the Holy Spirit of God. *Grieve not the Holy Spirit whereby ye are ſealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamour and evil-ſpeaking be put away from you, with all* MALICE.

Examine thyſelf then, my ſoul, how it ſtands with thee in this matter; ſince I may be a flouriſhing profeſſor outwardly, and yet no better than a painted ſepulchre inwardly. Am I humbled for my ſpiritual filthineſs? Do I mourn over the heart-riſings of pride, envy, malice, hatred, hypocriſy, unbelief, revenge, with the whole train of evil thoughts, which come from within and defile the man? Have I put on the Lord Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt? And have I, though but in a ſmall degree, the mind that was in him? Am I cloth-ed with humility, and am I bringing forth the fruits of the ſpirit, being kind, tender-hearted, forgiving others, even as God for Chriſt's ſake *hath* forgiven me? If this be my caſe, the humbling ſenſe I have of the ſpiritual evils with which my nature abounds, is a full proof that they have not the dominion over me; but that I am in the happy number of thoſe whoſe ſelf-knowledge keeps them low in their own eyes, and cauſeth them to take Chriſt as their *all in all.*

No. CXXVI.

WHATEVER be left undone, my ſoul, theſe things muſt be thy daily employment; and unleſs thou art in a bad ſtate of ſpiritual health, they will be ſo.

To be much in prayer and meditation.

Never to miſs reading ſome portion of God's *pure* word.

To ranſack every corner of a *deceitful and deſperately wicked heart.*

To keep a watch over every riſing thought, as well as over every word and action.

To

To be particularly on thy guard againſt any *beſetting* evil.

To bring the *ſolemn*, *ſolemn*, *ſolemn* hour of departure often before thy eyes.

In whatever buſineſs thy hands are engaged, this muſt be thy daily work, and that of every one who would be found watching, and who has taken Chriſt as his prophet, prieſt, and king.

No. CXXVII.

THERE is perhaps no part of a miniſter's office more arduous than to know how to encourage weak faith, and at the ſame time to diſcourage unbelief: and yet the difficulty ſeems to lie in diſtinguiſhing between that unbelief, which diſhonors God, by rejecting, or rather by doubting the teſtimony of his word; and that which makes the ſoul queſtion its own particular intereſt in the promiſes. Of the former kind was that of the diſciples, when our Lord *upbraided them with their unbelief and hardneſs of heart, becauſe they believed not them which had ſeen him after he was riſen.* Mark, xvi. 14. Luke, xxiv. 25. Of the latter kind was that of poor Peter, who, when he was ready to ſink, cried out *Lord ſave, I periſh.* Whilſt Jeſus very gently, if at all, rebuked

buked his fears and miſgivings, he cheriſhed and comforted his weak faith. *O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?* Of the ſame kind is that of every humble convinced ſinner, weary with doubts, and heavy laden with fears; and whoſoever tells a poor, penitent, awakened ſoul, that his doubts and fears increaſe his guilt, which muſt be the caſe if they are ſinful, rubs ſalt into the wounds, when he ſhould apply oil; and acts but too like the unfaithful ſhepherds of old, againſt whom the Lord thus complains by the mouth of his prophet. *The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened, neither have ye healed that which was ſick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken.* Ezek. xxxiv. 4.

A poor doubting ſoul ought not (indeed he cannot) reſt ſatisfied in ſuch a ſtate, but ought to be continually looking to Jeſus to increaſe his faith. *Compare this* No. *with* No. LVIII. p. 46.

No. CXXVIII.

IF thoſe who are apt to take things amiſs in others, would carefully examine their own hearts, they would generally find this temper owing to ſomething *very much amiſs* in themſelves.

ſelves. Pride and ſelf-will are commonly the parents of it.

No. CXXIX.

THERE are ſome perſons who, ſo long as they fancy that you look upon them to be all perfection, will be exceedingly pleaſed with you; but if they have let out their corruptions before you, and they think you ſee them in their true colours, they immediately diſlike you.

When this temper appears, it proves to a certainty, that all their ſeeming love to you, was only love to themſelves; and that as the pride of being thought ſomething firſt begat it, ſo when they are conſcious that you can no longer have the ſame opinion of them which you had at firſt, pride meeting with a mortification, they can no longer *bear you*, merely becauſe you *know them*. For the very ſame reaſon it is, that others always diſlike thoſe whom they themſelves have behaved ill to.

But perhaps the moſt dreadful of all ſpiritual filthineſs is that of one miniſter of Chriſt envying another miniſter's gifts and uſefulneſs, even to a degree of malice which cannot bear to hear them commended.

That the human heart is capable of this, is too certain: But ſurely thoſe who feel any thing of the ſort riſing in their boſoms, ſhould immediately retire, and pray for that perſon, or miniſter, whom they find to be the object of this Satanical temper.

And as the whole train of ſpiritual evils *proceed from within*, what need have all to be earneſt at the throne of grace that they may obtain that *precious faith*, by which alone the heart can be purified, and be made a fit temple for the ſweet ſpirit of love to dwell in.

No. CXXX.

THE Lord paſſes his love over upon a ſoul, and takes it into covenant with himſelf, whilſt it is in a ſtate of enmity and rebellion againſt him, and dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. But the ſoul cannot be taken into covenant with God, and yet remain unpardoned; for if the covenant be not a covenant of peace and reconciliation, and if it do not actually re-inſtate the ſoul into that favor with God, which was forfeited by the fall, it does nothing.

Every

Every elect ſinner, then, is a partaker of the goſpel ſalvation, and is brought into a ſtate of reconciliation, whilſt he is *in his blood*, totally unconverted, *an enemy to God*, *ungodly*, *without ſtrength*, without faith, without repentance, or any one holy diſpoſition. Rom. v. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

In conſequence of the Lord's having loved, betrothed and eſpouſed to himſelf the elect ſinner in all his enmity and in all his filthineſs, and having freely forgiven him all treſpaſſes, the quickening ſpirit viſits his heart in a way of conviction of ſin, Col. i. 21, 22. Col. ii. 13, 14. Eph. ii. 4, 5. diſcovering to him its *exceeding ſinfulneſs*, filling him with a reſtleſs deſire to be delivered from its guilt, puniſhment and power; and cauſing him anxiouſly to ſeek out for that remedy which the ſcripture holds forth.

Now will any one affirm, that the ſoul in ſuch a ſtate, is under the curſe of the law; that it is not taken into covenant with God; and that it hath no union with Chriſt?

What! whilſt the ſpirit of Chriſt has poſſeſſion of the heart! Surely ſuch an aſſertion is big with abſurdity, and at once ſays, that there is and is not reconciliation; and that though Chriſt be in the ſinner, and one with him, yet that the ſinner is not in Chriſt, and not one with him.

It will be ſaid, that conviction of ſin precedes faith and regeneration, and that a ſinner cannot be intereſted in any of the goſpel bleſſings till he believes, nor till he is regenerate and born again:

I anſwer, Faith doth indeed diſcover to the elect ſinner, that he is taken into covenant with God; doth ſhew him that the law's curſe is removed from him to his ſurety; and that through faith it is that the Spirit manifeſts to the ſoul its adoption into the family of God; yea, that it is through faith only, the elect ſinner receives Chriſt in all his offices, as his prophet, prieſt, and king; and therefore it is, that ſuch great things are ſpoken of faith, and that it is ſaid to juſtify: yet, who but an ideot in divinity, would ſay that the grace of faith juſtifies, or that it reconciles to God, any otherwiſe than by laying hold of, or making known to the elect ſoul that perfect righteouſneſs which it hath in Chriſt, its head; of whom the ſoul is *apprehended* before it *apprehends* Chriſt.

In a word, to ſay that there is no being in covenant with God, no intereſt in goſpel bleſſings, no pardon, reconciliation, or juſtification, no union with Chriſt, no redemption from the curſe of the law, no acceptance with God (for theſe are ſynonimous terms) before conviction of ſin, nor before faith and regeneration, is to make

make all that dependent upon inherent grace, which is itſelf the ground and foundation of that very grace; conſequently it makes the cauſe to flow from the effect, inſtead of the effect from the cauſe; at the ſame time that it favors too much of a refined ſort of juſtification by works, and holds forth a very uncomfortable idea to diſtreſſed, awakened conſciences.

It will not however be found ſo certain as ſome imagine, that conviction of ſin precedes faith and regeneration. The truth is, that in order of time they all take place together, inſomuch that no one can be convinced of ſin without a degree of faith in the ſcripture teſtimony; and no one is either convinced of ſin, or has faith without being born again; a convinced, unregenerate believer being a contradiction in terms. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder.

But though conviction of ſin, faith and regeneration all take place at once, and are all complete works of God, as much as juſtification itſelf is complete (ſince no one can be half a convinced ſinner, half a believer, half born again, any more than he can be half juſtified) yet do they all admit of degrees and growth, though juſtification admits of neither. That is to ſay, the ſoul that is convinced of ſin, grows in the knowledge of the evil, and of the *exceeding ſinfulneſs of*

ſin; and ſtill attains greater degrees of this knowledge as it advances in the divine life, though it's original conviction be a perfect work of the ſpirit.

2*dly*. The ſoul that upon it's firſt awakening has but faith enough to put it on the flight to Chriſt, yea though his faith be but as a grain of muſtard-ſeed, and though it be impeded in it's progreſs by mountains of ſelf-righteouſneſs, and by dark thick clouds of unbelief, has as much received a complete Savior as the moſt advanced believer, though it may be many years before ſuch a ſoul attains to the full aſſurance of faith, and perhaps may never attain to it at all.

3*dly*. The ſoul which is thus far convinced of ſin, and is thus far looking to Chriſt, is as much born again of the ſpirit, and new created, as the moſt exalted ſaint can be, but as the natural babe grows in all its parts, ſo doth the new born ſpiritual babe grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jeſus Chriſt. In this ſenſe though regeneration itſelf be at firſt perfect, yet doth the new born child of grace grow and increaſe till it arrive at the full ſtature of a young man and father in Chriſt.

In brief there can be no intermediate ſtate, or moment between ſpiritual death and ſpiritual life; between unbelief and faith; between unregeneracy and being born again; and therefore the ſoul that has

has experienced the first quickening influences of the Holy Ghoſt, is as much paſſed from death unto life, and as much freed from curſe and condemnation as if he were already in Heaven: And all the works and duties of ſuch an one are acceptable to God in Chriſt, though done under much ſlaviſh fear and bondage of ſpirit, till the Holy Ghoſt cries abba father in the heart, and manifeſts to the ſoul it's adoption and intereſt in all the goſpel promiſes and new covenant bleſſings, filling it with joy and peace in believing, and giving it that perfect love which caſteth out all tormenting fear. Yet even after this, the ſoul may again have it's dark trembling fits, and loſe the ſenſe of Chriſt's love, though it never loſes the love of Chriſt himſelf.

No. CXXXI.

THE firſt ſpark of light, and the firſt motion of ſpiritual life in the heart of a ſinner, muſt come from him who is the light and the life of men. But Chriſt cannot dwell in the heart, unleſs there be union with him, and whoſoever is thus paſſed from death unto life is not under condemnation.

Again. An unbeliever cannot put forth any act of ſpiritual life, ſeeing he himſelf is dead in ſin:

ſin: and every ſuch act which a believer puts forth is the act of a juſtified perſon.

Theſe are ſelf-evident truths to an enlightened mind; and the neceſſary concluſions reſulting from them muſt be.

1*ſt*. That union and juſtification precede conviction of ſin; though the knowledge of theſe bleſſings be ſubſequent thereto.

2*dly*. That juſtification is paſſed over to the ſoul, whilſt it is ſpiritually dead.

3*dly*. That repentance does not fit or prepare any ſoul for pardoning mercy, but is a proof that the ſoul has received mercy as an ungodly ſinner.

4*thly*. That to preach up humiliation and reformation, in order to qualify the ſoul for pardon, is in effect to preach the law inſtead of the goſpel.

5*thly*. That all ſuch preachers require living works from dead men, and the obedience of God's children from ſuch as are children of wrath.

6*thly*. That both faith and repentance are fruits of union with Chriſt, and of reconciliation through his blood.

7*thly*. That the life of a believer is *hid with Chriſt in God*.

8*thly*. That *becauſe Chriſt liveth, he ſhall live alſo*.

9*thly*. That where the Holy Spirit dwells in the

the heart by faith, there the fruits of that Spirit muſt appear in the life.

10*thly*. That where Chriſt, the living head of his church, now is, there every living member muſt alſo be.

The above concluſions will pave the way for the following abſurdities, which are neceſſarily involved in the common popular miſtake of placing conviction of ſin by the ſpirit of Chriſt, before pardon of ſin by the merit of Chriſt.

To ſay, that a man has the grace of God in his heart, and that he is made a partaker of the life-giving ſpirit, convincing him of the evil of ſin, and making him willing to receive Chriſt in all his offices, and yet that his perſon is under condemnation, is full of groſs contradictions. It is to make a man at once dead, and alive; a child of light, and a child of darkneſs; a believer, and an unbeliever; regenerate, and carnal; one with Chriſt, and yet at enmity with him.

Into all theſe, and a thouſand more abſurdities, as deſtructive of the ſoul's peace as ſubverſive of pure goſpel truth, do they fall into, who inſtead of freely holding up Chriſt to ſinners as ſuch, tell poor ſouls that *by grace* they muſt repent, *by grace* they muſt amend their lives, *by grace* they muſt do this, that and the other, and then there is no doubt but God will pardon them, and give them an intereſt in Chriſt; yet this is the language of many

many miniſters—yea, of many who I am perſuaded not only mean well, but who are really the children of God, and who wiſh to bring ſouls to Chriſt, and whoſe labors the Lord bleſſes, notwithſtanding the remaining darkneſs by which, in a pious ſincerity and an honeſt fear and jealouſy for the intereſts of holineſs, they keep many of the Lord's people in continual bondage and diſtreſs of conſcience, laboring as it were in the fires, and calling for *the whole tale of bricks*, without *giving ſtraw* to make one: For though they ſhould tell ſinners of grace in Chriſt from morning till night, that grace is no grace to me, any more than it is to a devil or to a damned ſpirit, unleſs I receive it out of the fullneſs of Chriſt, which I can no otherwiſe do, but as I have firſt received Chriſt himſelf, and am one with him. The graft muſt be put into the tree before it can derive ſap and nouriſhment from that tree; ſo the believer muſt be united to Chriſt, the head of influence, before he can receive grace from him, as a branch engrafted into the true vine; and it is impoſſible he ſhould be ſo united and engrafted, and ſtill remain a child of wrath, in a ſtate of enmity againſt God; and if not in a ſtate of enmity, then he muſt be in a ſtate of reconciliation: unleſs we affirm with the papiſts, that juſtification is progreſſive, and dependent on the conduct of the creature.

Theſe truths are ſo demonſtrable and ſelf-evident, that it is amazing how ſo many good and gracious ſouls can ſtumble at them: But as this view of things entirely takes the whole buſineſs of ſalvation out of the ſinner's hands, and places it in the Savior's, no wonder we are ſo unwilling to ſubmit to it.

I am, however, aware of an objection which may be raiſed againſt the doctrine.

It may be aſked, how can there be union between Chriſt and the ſoul, before the bond of that union be cemented by the Spirit given from Chriſt, working faith in the ſinner's heart?

I anſwer, that the union and oneneſs which ſubſiſts before faith, is through Chriſt the fœderal head and repreſentative of his church, having actually taken the fleſh and blood of all the elect ſeed, who were choſen with him and in him as members and very parts of his body; yea, as *bone of his bone*, and *fleſh of his fleſh*; and to whom grace was given in him before the foundation of the world: but the manifeſtation of this union, and the ſinner's own knowledge of it, is by the faith of the operation of God, at the time of effectual calling.

Whilſt theſe truths open a more glorious diſplay of divine grace and love, they bring with them at the ſame time the fulleſt confirmation of the

the doctrines of unconditional election, and of the final perſeverance of every ſoul that was given to Chriſt in the covenant of redemption: and in this view of them they were embraced by *Theodore Beza*, and the moſt eminent men among the Reformers. And though they were on this account termed *Supralapſarians*, yet it will perhaps be difficult to ſplit the hair between them and others of the Reformers who, for diſtinction ſake, were called *Sublapſarians*.

No. CXXXII.

A BELIEVER is *the light of the world. The ſalt of the earth. A city ſet on an hill. A child of God. A friend of God. An heir of God. A joint-heir with Chriſt. He is a partaker of the divine nature. He is one with Chriſt, and Chriſt is one with him. He is eſpouſed and married unto Chriſt. He is a member of Chriſt's body. He is bone of Chriſt's bone, and fleſh of Chriſt's fleſh. Chriſt liveth in him; dwells in his heart; ſups with him, and he ſups with Chriſt. The Father, Son, and Spirit* (the bleſſed Trinity in unity) *make their abode with him*, and condeſcend to have *fellowſhip and communion with him. He hath*

hath put on Chriſt; is in Chriſt; is crucified with Chriſt; is riſen with Chriſt; is ſet down in heavenly places with Chriſt.

Oh! love, paſſing knowledge. What manner of perſons ought we to be, in all holy converſation and godlineſs?

No. CXXXIII.

It is a raſh aſſertion (though not unfrequently heard) that any man will be condemned on account of his own righteouſneſs and good works; ſince no one will be puniſhed but for his unrighteouſneſs and for his bad works. Were his own righteouſneſs and works really ſuch as could bear the teſt of God's law, inſtead of being condemned for them, he would be juſtified by them; but as they fall infinitely ſhort of what that pure, juſt, and holy law demands, they become ſins and miſdeeds, inſtead of good and righteous works: and therefore it is that the truth and juſtice of God cannot but inflict the deſerved penalty upon them, according to his own declaration. Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. The law then is a miniſtration of death and condemnation even to thoſe who obſerve it

the moſt exactly. The goſpel is a miniſtration of righteouſneſs (of the juſtifying righteouſneſs of Chriſt) to all that truly believe.

And here it is worthy of obſervation, that though we render the words, καλα εργα, GOOD WORKS, yet the exact tranſlation is *ornamental works*, *i. e.* ſuch works whereby we adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

No. CXXXIV.

THOUGH the word imputation is made uſe of in ſcripture, as beſt ſuited to our capacities, and as expreſſive of the vicarious undertakings of the Lord Chriſt: Yet is the righteouſneſs of Chriſt more than imputed to a believer. It was as much wrought out by all the ſpiritual ſeed, in their ſecond living fœderal head, as the law was broken by all the natural ſeed, in their firſt fœderal head, Adam; in whom, as ſaith the apoſtle, all have ſinned.

In the ſame manner, then, as by the diſobedience of one, many were made ſinners; by the obedience of one, ſhall many be made righteous. And if all the elect really wrought out a perfect righteouſneſs in Chriſt, as being one with him; then they muſt have union with him, and this righteouſneſs muſt

muſt be theirs, even before it is *revealed to them* (as the ſame apoſtle ſpeaks) *by faith:* though, as conſidered in the firſt Adam, they are by nature children of wrath, even as others.

No. CXXXV.

THERE are few things which prove the diſorder which is introduced into the world by the fall, more than the ſeverity with which dumb creatures are too often uſed by thoſe to whom God hath placed them under ſubjection.

It is certain that there are many unconverted perſons (eſpecially among the amiable ſex) who from a certain contexture of conſtitution, feel much for animals in diſtreſs, and who love to make them happy; ſurely then all thoſe, whoſe feelings are heightened by religion, and who know that all animals, in their degree, partake of the miſeries of the general apoſtacy, and that *the whole creation travaileth and groaneth* on this account, ought to do all in their power to bring things back to their original ſtate in Paradiſe, where I doubt not but every creature flocked about the happy pair in innocence, and placed the fulleſt confidence in their primæval lord. And were man now to ſhew

himſelf kind and tender-hearted towards them, it is certain that confidence would in a great meaſure be recovered, as has been proved in various inſtances (particularly in the amity ſubſiſting between the excellent Mr. Cowper, author of the Poems, and his hare); and the kingdoms of this world, in reſpect of the intercourſe and happineſs among the different orders of beings, become a peaceful millenium ſtate. The wiſeſt man that ever lived, (he who is emphatically the wiſdom of God excepted) has left it on record, that *the merciful man is merciful to his beaſt*; by which it is evident, that it is as much the character of one who fears God, to be indulgent to the brute creation, as it is for him to pray or to give alms.

———The meaneſt things that are,
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the firſt,
Who in his ſovereign mercy made them all.
Ye therefore who love mercy, teach your ſons
To love it too.

Cowper.

No. CXXXVI.

No. CXXXVI.

THERE can perhaps be no better judgment formed of a man's ſtate Godward, than by the eſtimate he has of the world. Every real Chriſtian looks upon the world as his ſoul's foe, and whilſt he is *in* the world, is not *of* the world: nay even when the world puts on the moſt alluring face, he accounts its ſmiles as thoſe of a deceitful harlot, and the language of his heart is, *Thou art my portion, O Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I deſire in compariſon of thee?* His opinion of the world at all times muſt be, that it is a poor, empty, worthleſs bubble, which will ſoon vaniſh away; and even at thoſe ſeaſons when he feels himſelf too much entangled and drawn aſide by worldly objects, ſtill his judgment is not changed, and he wonders he ſhould be ſo much the dupe of a bewitching ſtrumpet. It is not ſo with the Formaliſt. Amidſt his higheſt parade of religious pomp, ſo far is he from ſuſpecting the world to be his adverſary, that it is his idol. Give him plenty of the world, and in return he will give God plenty of prayers and ſacraments and *ſome* alms-deeds, but amidſt them all, the world is uppermoſt

in his affections; though "God forbid (ſays he) that I ſhould neglect my duty."

No. CXXXVII.

IT was an obſervation of that great ornament of the law, *Sir Mathew Hale*, that in proportion as he had ſanctified the Sabbath Day, God had proſpered him all the reſt of the week. I fear there are few lawyers now-a-days of this good man's opinion; I ſhould rather ſay, I fear there are but few who have tried his experiment; as Sunday is the great day for drawing and examining briefs, holding conſultations, &c. and above all, for the pleaſing amuſement of receiving *retainers*. But not to look at *the law* alone; Sunday, among all ranks (perſons in high life ſetting the pernicious example) is the principal day for feaſtings, viſitings, travelling, &c. and of late for concerts. In a word, the Lord's day is ſet apart for every thing but for the Lord; and, in too many families, almoſt all kind of buſineſs is tranſacted on that day, except the great buſineſs of piety and religion. Surely, God hath a controverſy with us, and will be avenged of ſuch a nation as this, for our horrid abuſe of his ſacred day of reſt.

It is to be hoped, however, that his Majeſty's late proclamation has done ſome good in ſtemming

ming the torrent of Sabbath impiety. May magiſtrates be active! May miniſters be earneſt! May every private Chriſtian, by precept and example, lend an hand to help forward this ſalutary work! and may we be as much diſtinguiſhed for our national repentance and amendment, as we have been and ſtill are for our national wickedneſs and profaneneſs! Elſe, without pretending to prophetic gifts, I fear I may truly ſay, that an heavy cloud of wrath hangs over us, and is even now ready to burſt upon this devoted land, devoted, not to God, but to ſin, and on that account *to deſtruction.* As a nation, both Churchmen and Diſſenters have departed from the pure evangelical doctrines of the reformation; and our dreadful defection in principle has produced an equally dreadful defection in practice.

Arianiſm, Socinianiſm, Pelagianiſm, and Arminianiſm are not aſhamed to unveil their faces, and to woo their lovers at noon day, and many, very many unwary and unſtable ſouls have they beguiled and eſpouſed, to themſelves; but whether we view this grand quadruple alliance of *iſms*, ſeparate or united, they have altogether produced but one frightful diſtorted brat, viz. practical Antinomianiſm. From Parents and offſpring *good Lord deliver us* and our Land.—Amen and Amen.

THE

THE FOLLOWING

MEDITATIONS

WERE TRANSCRIBED

FROM A DIARY BOOK, WHICH WAS WRITTEN ABOUT THE YEAR 1758.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN.

WAS the innocent Joſeph hated and deſpiſed of his brethren, who moved by envy, (Acts, vii. 9.) conſpired his death? So was the immaculate Lamb of God hated, deſpiſed, and conſpired againſt by his brethren the Jews, who for envy delivered him to Pilate. (Mat. xiv. 10.) Was Joſeph ſold, ſtript of his raiment, and caſt into a pit? So was Chriſt both ſold and ſtript; whoſe death and lying in the grave is ſtrikingly typified by Joſeph's lying in the pit; the pit and the grave being uſed in ſcripture as ſynonimous terms. Was Joſeph drawn out of the pit, and made ruler over a nation

that

that till then had not known him? So God would not *leave the ſoul of his holy one in hell; neither ſuffer him to ſee corruption*; but he roſe again, *to be a light to lighten the Gentiles*, and was *found of them that ſought him not*. Was Chriſt tempted, and did he overcome the temptation? So it was with Joſeph, who reſiſted and overcame the temptations of his miſtreſs. Did Chriſt ſuffer with two malefactors; and was the one pardoned and the other condemned? So was Joſeph numbered with the tranſgreſſors, when he was impriſoned with the butler and baker of Pharoah, one of whom was pardoned, and the other condemned. Was it ſaid of Joſeph, that he ſhall teach his ſenators wiſdom? How much more is this true of Chriſt, the Eternal Word, the Wiſdom of God! Did all that was put into Joſeph's hand, proſper? So it is ſaid of Chriſt, that the pleaſure of the Lord ſhould proſper in his hand. Did a grievous famine prevail in other lands whilſt there was plenty in Egypt, where Joſeph was? So wherever Chriſt is not, there muſt of neceſſity be a ſpiritual famine; but wherever the true Joſeph is, there will be bread *enough, and to ſpare*. Did multitudes who were ready to periſh for want, flock from all parts to buy corn of Joſeph? So unto Chriſt is *the gathering of the nations*, who breaketh the bread of life to the hungry,

hungry, and filleth the empty ſoul with goodneſs.

Thus much of this intereſting prophetic hiſtory is already accompliſhed; the remaining part of it will not perhaps be fulfilled in its ſpiritual ſenſe, before the time of the reſtoration of the Jews; till the arrival of which happy period the yearning of Joſeph's bowels towards his barbarous brethren, who ſuppoſed him to be dead, and knew not that it was he that had preſerved, fed, and ſupported them, doth finely and ſtrikingly repreſent the wonderful affection of Chriſt towards his crucifiers the Jews, who though now he is eſtranged from them, and they *eſteem him ſmitten, ſtricken, and afflicted*, Iſa. 53. yet doth he ſtill preſerve them, and will *never leave them, nor forſake them*, but at his *ſecond coming* to eſtabliſh his glorious kingdom in the Millenium will make himſelf known to them, with more than that amazing tenderneſs wherewith Joſeph, *at the ſecond time* (Acts vii. 13.) diſcovered himſelf to his brethren. (Gen. xlv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, &c.) Then ſhall they look upon him whom they have pierced. Then ſhall they acknowledge him to be indeed the ſon of God, their much injured Meſſiah, as Joſeph's brethren did look upon, and acknowledge him to be their much injured brother, the dearly beloved ſon of their father in whom he was well pleaſed.

At

At this glorious juncture (which by all the ſigns of the times is not far off,) the church of Jews and Gentiles, of the calling of whom Joſeph's younger brother Benjamin was an eminent type, will be united, and we ſhall be *one fold under one ſhepherd Jeſus Chriſt.*

This very remarkable hiſtory of Joſeph and his brethren ſeems placed at the beginning of the Bible as a ſhort ſummary preface containing all that ſhould befal the Jewiſh nation from its riſe to the end of the world.

There is yet a more particular application of this hiſtory, (eſpecially of the latter part of it,) when Chriſt manifeſts himſelf to a ſoul that has been long in deſertion, at which time there is a meeting between them, very like that of Joſeph and his brethren; but as Joſeph ſeemed for a time to uſe his brethren unkindly, when they came to him for corn, though ready to periſh for want, yet his bowels all the while yearned moſt affectionately towards them; ſo many poor, fainting ſouls, that come hungering and thirſting after righteouſneſs, ſeem to meet with what they are apt to think very hard treatment, as we ſee in the caſe of the pſalmiſt, when he cries out in ſuch bitterneſs of ſoul *hath God forgotten to be gracious? is his mercy clean gone for ever, and will he be no more intreated?* (Pſ. 77.) So again, *O my God I cry*

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in the day time, but thou heareſt not, and in the night ſeaſon alſo I take no reſt. This is further exemplified in the blind man, who ſat by the way ſide begging. (Lu. xviii. 35, &c.) As alſo in the poor woman of Canaan. (Mat. xv. 22, &c.) Jeſus at firſt ſeems to take no notice of either of them; nay, he gives nothing but diſcouraging anſwers to the latter, though he plainly ſhewed them afterwards that his heart was full of love towards them all the while he ſeemed deaf to their intreaties. And as Joſeph's brethren were troubled at his preſence, partly through joy, and partly through a ſenſe of their own ingratitude, when he ſaid unto them, "*I am Joſeph:*" ſo when Chriſt ſays to a poor ſoul, "*I am thy ſalvation,*" then is that ſoul as it were overwhelmed, partly at the thoughts of its own unworthineſs, and partly at the torrent of ſacred joy that overpowers it.

The World's Estimate of Conversion.

SO long as a man continues careleſs about the ſtate of his ſoul, he may paſs on ſmoothly, and will meet with little or no oppoſition in the broad way that leads to deſtruction, if he deck himſelf with a few external duties, and live not in any groſs

groſs notorious ſins, he will be looked upon as a perſon of great value and merit; and his piety will be highly extolled: but if he indeed take his ſalvation ſeriouſly to heart, and, inſtead of the huſks of religion, be willing to feed upon the kernel, then will the devil's agents ſoon riſe up againſt him, and no name will be too bad for him. Once indeed he was an honeſt, good ſort of a man; but now he is a poor, melancholy mope, or crack-brained enthuſiaſt. Once he did every thing as he ought; but now he carries matters a great deal too far. Now do his anxious relations, and others that go by the name of his friends, begin to admoniſh him of his error; and exhort him not to make himſelf particular, telling him to beware of being righteous overmuch; and that there is no need of all that extraordinary preciſeneſs that he is apt to imagine; that he is low-ſpirited and ought to take his innocent diverſions freely, and go into company, and be like other people. Nay, ſome poor ſouls, under ſtrong convictions of ſin, have been treated as if they laboured under ſome bodily diſeaſe; the phyſician hath been ſent for, and in vain exerted all his ſkill, till Chriſt, the great phyſician of ſouls, has poured his ſweet balm of Gilead into the ſore; and, like the good Samaritan, by the wine of his blood, and the oil of his ſpirit, hath healed all

thoſe cankering wounds, which he met with among the thieves of this world.

So alſo it frequently happens, that when carnal, decent, dead-hearted Formaliſts are afraid of their relations becoming real vital Chriſtians, that they get daubing, unawakened clergymen to talk to them of the danger and abſurdity of running into extremes, and point out to them particular perſons as laudable examples for their imitation, telling them to obſerve Mr. Such-an-one, who, though a very charitable, good man, and univerſally eſteemed by all that know him, does nevertheleſs take his innocent pleaſures freely, and thinks a prudent compliance with the world highly neceſſary. But it muſt be replied, that the univerſal eſteem any man may meet with, is by no means a ſcripture mark of his being a diſciple of Jeſus Chriſt, who pronounces woe againſt all the world's favorites; (Lu. vi. 26.) and tells us expreſsly, that the world will always love its own, and ſpeak well of them, and hate thoſe whom he hath choſen out of the world. (John, xv. 19.) But on the contrary, it is thoſe that are perſecuted by the world, and are reviled and reproached of men, whom our dear Redeemer declares to be the heirs of Heaven. Bleſſed are they, ſaith he, which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Bleſſed are ye

when

when men ſhall revile you and perſecute you, and ſhall ſay all manner of evil againſt you falſely for my ſake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven. Mat. v. 10, 11. So alſo St. Paul aſſures us, that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God; and whoſoever will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

Now, let any one judge from theſe expreſs texts of ſcripture, whether to be well or ill ſpoken of by the world, is the trueſt mark of a Chriſtian.

But although the word of truth aſſures us that in the world we ſhall have tribulation, (John xvi. 33.) and that all who will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution; (2 Tim. iii. 12) yet our Savior tells us not to marvel if the world hate us; (1 John iii. 13.) hereby plainly intimating that this hatred of his true diſciples might well afford them matter of aſtoniſhment: for what more unlikely than that ſo long as a perſon continues a rebel to God, a ſlave to his luſts and appetites, a bitter enemy to mankind in general, and particularly to all his acquaintance, by doing what is in his power to keep them from their only good, and to encourage them to go on in the broad way that leads to deſtruction, what more unlikely than that a perſon of this ſtamp

ſhould be univerſally loved and eſteemed? Again what more unlikely than that ſuch an one ſhould no ſooner be made ſenſible of his error, acknowledge his ingratitude to his Maker and Redeemer, become meek, humble, affable, and loving to all; experience the happineſs of his change, pity the miſery of thoſe who are ſtill under the deluſion, be deſirous of reſcuing them from the jaws of hell, and of making them partakers of that real heartfelt joy, which is the companion of the eſtabliſhed Chriſtian; what more unlikely, I ſay, than that a man ſhould no ſooner undergo ſuch a change, than he ſhould be moſt cordially hated by the generality of people; and that they ſhould fall upon him like ravenous wolves? Yet, however extraordinary this may ſeem, daily experience ſhews it to be true.

But though the Chriſtian cannot help ſincerely pitying his perſecutors, and praying to God to turn their hearts, yet in ſome ſenſes he may look upon them as his real friends; *1ſt.* Becauſe they afford him a diſtinguiſhing mark of his being in the right way to glory, which without the aſſiſtance of their malice he could not have obtained. *2dly.* Becauſe it is oftentimes with a Child of God, as with a ſluggiſh horſe, he muſt be ſpurred on when he is inclinable to ſtand ſtill; ſo the reproaches and outcries of the world, are excellent

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lent incitements to encourage and ſtimulate the followers of Chriſt, to preſs forward in the ways of holineſs; and in proportion as they are perſecuted by the world, to ſeek cloſer fellowſhip and communion with him who hath overcome the world for their ſakes, and is able to keep them from the evil of it.

A Meditation, on Wisd. ch. v.

"This was he whom we had ſometimes in de-
"riſion, and as a proverb of reproach.
"We fools accounted his life madneſs; and his
"end to be without honor."

Wiſdom of Solomon, ch. v.

THESE words are, by the author of the Book of Wiſdom, put into the mouths of thoſe, who, in the days of their health and gaiety, took pleaſure in reproaching and ridiculing the people of God, as a company of poor, deſpicable, moping fools, or downright madmen, to forſake all the mirth and jollity that this life might have afforded them, in order to truſt to the uncertainty of what might happen hereafter.

The ſcene repreſents the day of judgment; the actors are the above-mentioned ſcoffers, who in this doleful tragedy, begin to have very different notions of things, than what they had when playing their parts in that farce wherein they ſhone ſo brightly upon the ſtage of this world. For then they could find no better language for the godly, than *ye fools*, and *ye madmen*; but now the caſe is quite altered. The righteous is proved to be the only wiſe man; and they are conſtrained to call themſelves, *we fools*, and *we madmen*.

But let us not ſuppoſe, that theſe deſpiſers and abuſers of the people of God were confined to Solomon's time: ſince even *God manifeſt in the fleſh*, was reproached as a madman, and as being poſſeſſed with a devil; and the choſen veſſel, St. Paul, was rudely told by a noble governor, that *he was beſide himſelf*, when ſpeaking that wiſdom which is not of this world. Now then, if our bleſſed Lord himſelf, and the great apoſtle of the Gentiles were thus ill-treated and ridiculed, how much more ſhall the inferior ſervants of the houſehold of faith be contemned, and counted the offſouring of all things?

Indeed he ſhews himſelf to be a novice in the ſchool of Chriſt, or rather, I ſhould fear, he had never received *the grace of God in truth*, who ſuppoſes that it is poſſible to be *a Chriſtian alto-*

gether, and not meet with rebuffs and perſecutions from a carnal world. Slander and detraction no man is proof againſt; and oftentimes the faireſt characters ſhall be the moſt foully bedaubed by the tongue of malevolence. For, as the excellent Mr. Jenks well obſerves, that "whatever any "may talk or think of ſome being ſo good, they can "have no enemies, but all muſt needs love them, "it is indeed mere talk and miſtake; for if they be "good indeed, with the holy good, the beſt and "chief of goods (and without which none is really "good), all that goodneſs ſhall not defend them; "but many articles ſhall be found againſt them."

In ſhort, it is not only certain, that *all who will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt ſuffer perſecution*; (2 Tim. iii. 12.) but that ſo ſoon as a perſon comes to the right uſe of his ſenſes, the world will be ready to think him mad. This may ſeem to be an hard ſaying to many; but I am convinced, that there are few real Chriſtians but have experienced it to be true.

NATURE STARK BLIND IN SPIRITUALS.

IT was admirably well ſaid "that there is more need of grace than of learning to make a Chriſtian." And if we will believe the ſcriptures, we may know that many things are hid from the wiſe and prudent, and revealed unto babes: (i. e.) Though the things of God cannot be fathomed by the wiſdom of this world, yet he is pleaſed to reveal them by his ſpirit to ſuch as are but babes in Chriſt, and receive the goſpel with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity. Hence it frequently happens that poor, illiterate peaſants, who have received the grace of God in truth, are much better judges of ſpiritual matters, and much better qualified to diſcourſe of them, than many learned Rabbi's, and ſubtle reaſoners, who have perhaps turned over one commentator after another, without attaining one grain of that knowledge whereby alone we can be wiſe unto ſalvation: for *God hath choſen the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe* (1 Cor. 1. 27) and *the natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them becauſe they*

they are ſpiritually diſcerned; but he that is ſpiritual judgeth all things. (1 Cor. 2, 14, 15.) Therefore be a man never ſo well ſkilled in languages, be he never ſo profound a philoſopher, yet if he is ſtill in his natural ſtate, he is much more incapable of diſcovering the myſteries of that kingdom, which is *righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt*, (Rom. 14. 17.) than a clown is of diſcerning the ſecrets of all the kingdoms of Europe. Nay farther, a man who is born blind and deaf may have a better conception of colours or ſounds, than any mind unenlightened by the ſpirit of God can form of ſoul-ſaving things. Not but what human learning will greatly aſſiſt thoſe that are poſſeſſed of it in the hiſtorical and prophetical parts of ſcripture; as well as in the knowledge of the original languages in which the ſacred volume was written, yet when they come to explain *the deep things of God*, what blundering work do they make of it! perhaps giving you this, and that doctor's opinion, till they have gone through all but the right, which if they happen to meet with in any Chriſtian author, they think too abſurd to be inſerted, unleſs it be to expoſe and ridicule it: therefore though grace without learning will make a Chriſtian; yet learning without grace will only lead into errors; but when learning and grace go together, it is a bleſſed

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thing for the poſſeſſor, as well as for the church of God.

Was a grave, formal, unawakened profeſſor, to hear the people of God talk about their experiences, their ſpiritual deſertions and comforts, the workings of the Holy Ghoſt upon their hearts, their convictions, and humiliations, their legal terrors, and ſtruggles with the ſpirit of bondage, and their ſweet ſenſe and feeling of the ſpirit of adoption, what wonderful jargon, and enthuſiaſtical gibberiſh muſt it appear to him! would he not think them *a people of a ſtrange language?* and more proper objects for bedlam, than for heaven.

This conſideration ſhould teach real Chriſtians to be cautious how they diſcourſe of ſuch things before the unconverted, and how they *caſt their pearls before ſwine*, that will either trample them under foot, or turn again and devour thoſe who offer them.

Spiritual Deſertions and Comforts.

WERE we always to be exulting under the ſenſible comforts of the ſpirit, how little ſhould we know of our own *deſperately wicked hearts!* how

how liable ſhould we be to be puff'd up with ſpiritual pride, and to fancy ourſelves the chief favourites of Heaven! ſo that in the ſchool of darkneſs and deſertion, the Chriſtian learns many excellent and uſeful leſſons. Then it is, that he ranſacks his heart with diligence, and finds it to be a foul ſink of iniquity, a *Babylon of unclean birds and ſpirits.* Then it is, that he ſees his utter inability *to do any thing of himſelf to help himſelf*, and that his *ſufficiency is of God.* Then doth he plainly perceive the folly of putting any *confidence in the arm of fleſh*, and that he muſt *truſt in the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God.* Then doth he learn *to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary*, and to tell others from his own experience that *man doth not live by bread alone*, but *by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* Again; it is in the ſtate of deſertion that the Chriſtian learns to receive ſpiritual bleſſings with greater thankfulneſs, from a thorough conviction that he can as ſoon move a mountain, or create a world, as kindle the leaſt ſpark of divine love in his hard, dull, dead, cold, heart; till Chriſt *the ſun of Righteouſneſs ariſe* upon it *with healing under his wings*; or as the ſweet canticle expreſſes it, he ſees that *if a man would give all the ſubſtance of his houſe for love, it ſhould utterly be contemn'd.*

Laſtly,

Laſtly, the faithful ſoul that hath experienced a long, and painful abſence from her beloved, and has been ſeeking him beſides *the ſhepherds tents*, (the ordinances,) and enquiring for him amongſt *the watchmen*, (the miniſters) though without ſucceſs; as ſoon as ſhe hears his *ſweet* and *well known voice*, and perceives him to be *looking forth at the windows*, and *ſhewing himſelf through the lattice*; then will ſhe *ariſe* and *open* the *door* of her *heart* to her *beloved bridegroom*, for fear he ſhould *withdraw himſelf*, and will not ſuffer *his head to be filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night*. Then will ſhe *hold him faſt*, and *will not let him go*, till ſhe has brought him into her *mother's houſe* (the church), where *his banner over her will be love*; and the language of the ſpouſe's ſoul, "*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.*

[*See this extracted from different parts of the canticle.*]

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AN

AN

HYMN,

CONTAINING THE

AUTHOR'S OWN EXPERIENCE:

COMPOSED ONE NIGHT WHEN HE COULD NOT SLEEP.

God my Maker giveth Songs in the Night. Job, xxxv. 10.

I.

MY guilty ſoul, how long beſet,
With terrors all around;
Whilſt law and juſtice claim'd their debt,
But I no payment found.

II.

In works and duties long I try'd
Some inward peace to find;
The more I ſtrove, the more I cry'd,
Ah! much is left behind.

III.

My weary ſoul the taſk renew'd,
And fain the prize would win;
But when my righteous deeds I view'd,
I found each deed was ſin.

IV.

Now Sinai's thunders louder roll,
And ſenſe proclaim'd me loſt;
Diſtracting anguiſh ſeiz'd my ſoul,
And Hope gave up the ghoſt!

V.

At length I heard the goſpel ſound,
O joyful ſound to me!
Jehovah juſt may ſtill be found,
And ſet th' ungodly free.

VI.

That precious blood, which faith applies,
In ſpight of hell and ſin,
My guilty conſcience pacifies,
And ſpreads ſweet peace within.

My

VII.

My ſpotleſs Savior liv'd for me,
On him my ſins were laid;
And whilſt I view him riſe, I ſee
Each mite was fully paid.

VIII.

Aſcended now to God on high,
Above th' ætherial ſkies,
He bids me boldly to draw nigh,
And all my wants ſupplies.

IX.

Though baſe back-ſlidings me reprove,
He thoſe backſlidings heals:
Diſplays his never-changing love,
And all his grace reveals.

X.

Say, deareſt ſhepherd, tell me why,
To me this wond'rous love;
That ſuch a poor loſt ſheep as I,
Such matchleſs grace ſhould prove?

XI.

Reaſons I ſeek, but ſeek in vain,
For none I e'er ſhall know:
Then ſeek no more, ſince this is plain,
That God wou'd have it ſo.

FINIS.

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